

D R A M A T I C S

An Educational Magazine for Directors, Teachers, and Students of Dramatic Arts

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IT'S I U IN '52



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BISHOP AND THE CONVICT. Pauline Phelps. Play founded on an incident in "Les Miserables" by Victor Hugo. 3 m. 2 f. Int. 25 min. The story is the familiar one of Jean Valjean stealing the Bishop's candlesticks. A contest winner. No royalty.50c

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As I See It . . .

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A STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY

In trying out for a play you, the student, must assume a very definite responsibility: freedom from pressure of all other activities. It takes time to prepare a play for public presentation, and there is nothing so vexing to your director as absenteeism and tardiness. Usually the excuses offered are conflicts with other activities. As too many of you students want "to eat your cake and have it too," your faculty director is justified in screening all applicants before they are permitted to try-out. You who have major roles in a play or major committee assignments have very little time remaining for other activities during the preparation and rehearsal period. Your director is within bounds in requiring that kind of cooperation.

I shall see your play only at its dress rehearsal. Of course I shall be glad to discuss with you any problems which may arise, but I shall not attend any rehearsals. The play is your responsibility and you will be scored accordingly." You will be amazed at the results providing the student directors have been carefully selected. **The plays will be good!**

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"As a result of our troupe sponsorship, 37 students from our dramatics department are attending a performance of **Death of a Salesman** at the Victory Theatre in Dayton. A total of 49 students, faculty, and patrons are composing the complete group attending this Pulitzer Prize play en masse on November 14. We are arranging for a tour of the



Thespian Troupe 1164, Wichita Falls, Texas

A DIRECTOR'S RESPONSIBILITY

In some schools play directors screen incoming students for their drama departments. After selling desirable and talented students a bill of goods, the director then issues an ultimatum that all students in his department may not accept major assignments or may assume only minor responsibilities in other activities. I find no fault with such a system, especially in those schools which have too many extracurricular activities. I do not approve, however, of such a set-up if the dramatic arts program is not broad enough to keep all students in the department interested and busy throughout the school year. One cannot expect teen-agers to sit still twirling their thumbs for any length of time just waiting for an assignment. They will find activity wherever it may be, even if they must desert their "first love."

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—**Ralph W. Miller, Sponsor, Troupe 1044, Vandalia, Ohio.**

"Our affiliation with Thespians is most stimulating and inspiring to students and teacher alike! The publications are interesting and useful."—**Mrs. Frances O. Cobbs, Sponsor, Troupe 1018, Anniston, Alabama.**

BOYS! BOYS! BOYS!

I purposely included this picture of Thespian Troupe 1164, Wichita Falls, Texas, in this column for two reasons: First, this school was the first of 23 schools to date to be granted charters since July 1, 1951, the opening of our fiscal year; and secondly, it is so seldom that this office receives pictures in which the boys are in the majority. Count them: 12 boys (so good-looking too); 6 girls (they're okay too). The only person missing is the sponsor, Miss Elizabeth Geer. **A worthwhile dramatic arts program throughout the year plus the sponsor's love and enthusiasm for theatre will pay dividends.**

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In This Issue

RONALD MITCHELL of the University of Wisconsin offers pertinent suggestions for making the most of the musical organizations of your school. His article, *Music Adds to the Play*, stresses wise selection of the music by the play director so that the mood of the play is not submerged. Do you select the music?

WE'VE seen the bedrooms, the lounges, the cafeteria of the new Quadrangle Dormitory at Indiana University in which all delegates of the Fourth National Dramatics Arts Conference will be housed during the week of June 23. Believe me when I tell you this dormitory is really new. Over 1000 persons can be housed in this building alone, and it's only a block from the beautiful Theatre Building in which all sessions and workshops will be scheduled. So that you can catch some of our enthusiasm we are featuring pictures of this building in our announcement of the conference. *It's IU in '52.*

THEATRE in the round is the theme of Miss Bean's article, *As Near As Your Mailbox*. She relates her experiences with this kind of theatre at her school, Atwood, Ill., a rural high school. Although I am not entirely sold on arena theatre for major productions, especially when legitimate theatre can be presented, Miss Bean explains well its possibilities in schools lacking in basal equipment. *Any theatre is better than no theatre at all.*

MISS Barbara E. Dodson, sponsor of Troupe 35, Mainland High School, Daytona Beach, Florida, is the author of our play of the month, *Staging Our Miss Brooks*, the play rated the number one spot in our Thespian Summary of last year. When I attended the Florida State Regional Conference last May at Miami, I had the pleasure of meeting Miss Dodson, whom I mistook as one of the student delegates. Was my face red!

OUR Thespian student reporters are doing a "bang-up" job in writing about their Troupe activities in our *Thespian Chatter* department. Here is a real opportunity for them to write for a national magazine with a circulation of nearly 24,000.

I LIKE Si Mill's article about Ricky, David, Harriet and Ozzie Nelson. This family radio show is one of the best on the air. Paul Myer's article about our *Musical Comedy Queens* is tops as usual. John Hallauer continues with his helpful suggestions on acting by stressing motivation and concentration.

AS you no doubt recall the January issue last year was the *Pictorial Issue*, which now has been discontinued. You have noticed that more pictures have been included in each issue this year instead of placing most of them in one issue as in the past. It's costing us more for engraving to have a larger number of pictures in each issue, but we think it's worth it because of the better displays. We hope you agree.

NEW ELDRIDGE PLAYS

★ MARRIAGE IS MURDER

Mary Stearns — 4 M., 6 W.

Hal, the hero's first opinion, in this mystery mix-up is that "Marriage Is Murder!" Hal's sister believes her widowed brother has been single long enough. Unknown to him she sends his name to a matrimonial agency. You have to read the play from here on to know the mix-ups that follow.

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Wayne C. Lee — 4 M., 5 W.

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Delegates to the Fourth Dramatic Arts Conference will be housed in the new Quadrangle Dormitory at Indiana University during the week of June 23, 1952.

FOR the first time in the history of the National Dramatics Arts Conferences, sponsored by the National Thespian Society in co-operation with the Department of Drama, Indiana University, all delegates will be housed under one roof. The university has made available one of its newest dormitories, known as the Men's Quadrangle.

This dormitory, which is only about one block from the Theatre Building in which all sessions will be held, is one of the most complete housing units ever built on any college campus. Its lounge is spacious and beautiful. Carpeted from wall to wall and furnished with modern, comfortable furniture, it will be used by the delegates for recreation, sociability and relaxation. Excellently lighted from the large windows during the day and by the exquisite table and floor lamps at night, the lounge is further enhanced by the grand piano located near the center of the room. The lounge invites one to indulge in its luxuriant atmosphere.

All bedrooms are equipped with twin beds. The old-fashioned double-decker beds, commonly associated with college dormitories, are now relics of the past. The furniture is not only practical, but in good taste. Ample closet space has been provided and the draperies at the windows give the rooms a homey atmosphere.

The dining room will seat over 1000. Throughout the conference all meals will be served in cafeteria style except the conference banquet, which is scheduled for Thursday night, June 26. All delegates will be able to attend the banquet — a situation which did not exist at other conferences due to lack of space.

The conference will open on Monday evening, June 23, with a "get-acquainted" social hour in the Theatre auditorium and foyer and will close on Friday evening, June 27, with an informal dance. Tentative plans call for approximately twenty Thespian Troupes to participate in the conference. Every effort is being made to secure nationally known personalities to speak at the general assemblies.

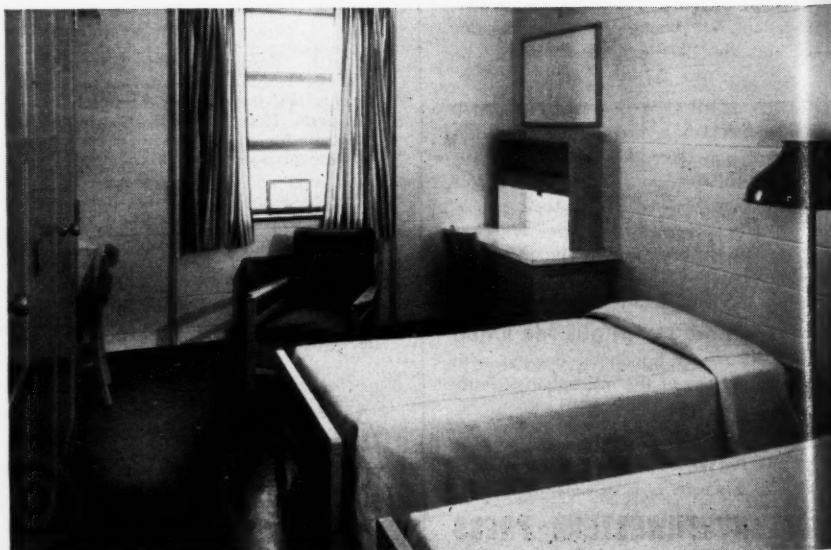
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Photo from the College of Pacific Production



AS NEAR AS YOUR MAILBOX

By LOUISE BURK BEAN

"WHAT is this theatre-in-the-round that they keep talking about in the play reviews? Could we do a play that way?"

The rural high school teacher who was asked these questions knew no more about arena staging than her youngsters, but she saw an opportunity to put to a practical test what had been studied in their communication units. She also saw the opportunity for a genuine experience in pupil teacher planning.

But practical information was needed before the dream could become a reality. Thus the *READER'S GUIDE* was consulted for articles as well as the library shelves at the neighboring university. Books from the state library were borrowed. Fortified now with this information that this kind of theatre can be successfully presented, both the teacher and students now examined play catalogues to find the suitable play.

A play with a simple setting, *Men Are Like Street Cars*, with parts for ten girls and five boys was chosen. Parts for three girls and one boy were written in so that all nineteen seniors trying out were given speaking parts.



Miss Bean's Theatre-in-the-round at the Atwood, Ill., High School.

Actual practice, however, brought production problems not answered in any of the literature consulted. Additional information was again sought through letters sent to prominent directors of arena theatres: Glenn Hughes of the University of Washington, Gerard Appy of Atlanta Penthouse Theatre and Margo Jones of Dallas Theatre. The group also wrote to the American National Theatre Association. Answers to all questions were received in a very short time.

The first two rehearsals were held in the center of the gym floor, but the players didn't get the feel of the room setting. For the third rehearsal they were moved to the stage with the curtains closed, but they were so accustomed to "front and center" playing they were unsuccessful in imagining the fourth wall closed. For the next rehearsal they were taken to the director's own living room where they finally got

the feeling of acting in a four-walled instead of a three-walled room.

Answers to the letters they sent gave suggestions for playing to all sections of the audience during each actor's on-stage without creating a whirling dervish effect. Players not acting sat in the circle to help check on this playing in four directions instead of one. The players also helped each other work out motivations for this moving and playing before different sectors of the audience.

Rehearsals were next moved to the gymnasium where the furniture was placed in identical arrangement on a rug the size of the living room used for previous practices. Since all the stage actions had been blocked, the emphasis was now on projection so members "behind" the players could hear. Regular tables, lamps and davenports were replaced with lower ones to avoid blocking the view of the audience. The cast made a trip to a neighboring town to see the same play given on a proscenium stage. They picked up several good ideas and also learned some pitfalls to avoid. As soon as a decision had been reached on this new style staging, the community was prepared for it through a series of articles in the school newspaper, the village weekly and the city dailies. These releases included a brief history of arena staging, theatres-in-the-round on the campuses and in the metropolitan areas, reports of correspondence with professional theatre people, diagrams of stage and seating, a synopsis of the play, feature stories of the cast and staff members, their previous experience in dramatics and incidents at play practice.

The group had no portable lighting equipment and no spotlights. The three boys who comprised the light crew made a group of spots from stove pipes and



Thespian Troupe 1167, Will Rogers High School, Tulsa, Okla., Doris Niles, Sponsor.

(Continued on page 35)

MUSIC ADDS TO THE PLAY

By RONALD MITCHELL



Thespians of Troupe 326, Central Kitsap High School, Silverdale, Wash., applying "assembly-line" make-up to casts of faculty and parents. Mrs. Jen Southworth is the Thespian Sponsor.

HAVE you ever noticed the extra excitement at the start of a musical production? It is not only the sight of the orchestra tuning up, nor the audience talking over the squeaks and boops. There's an extra thrill in the air, just because people are expecting to hear music. A song is that much more exciting than a speech, and a tune played on a piano or by a flute is more fun to listen to than the scraping of chairs, the rattle of dishes or the feet of the actors stomping over the uncarpeted floor of the stage.

Everyone knows the pleasures of a well done, ambitious musical, whether it is an operetta like *Naughty Marietta*, a comic opera like *H.M.S. Pinafore*, or a modern piece written especially for amateurs, like *Down in the Valley*. Some people even know about the work that has to go into such a production if it is to be any good. A lot of work goes into a straight play too, but not as much.

But isn't there something between the two? In fact when you come to think of it, are there not hundreds of shows to produce which have some music, even though it may be only one song, someone playing a piano, a park band in the distance, or a radio switched on? It is not enough to make the show a musical, but it is a show that uses music. And are there not some plays that do not seem to require music when you first look them over, but which may be a good deal better if they had some?

Naturally you would not want to spoil a perfectly good play by giving the actors songs to sing instead of getting on with the scene, and you would not want to drown the best speeches with a full orchestra. But there is the beginning of the play as the audience is gathering; there are act intermissions and scene intermissions; and occasionally there are moments in the play itself

when music does something for a scene which nothing else can do.

"Why, sure!" you say, "the movies use music all the time. There isn't a show without it. And in the old silent picture days, didn't they have a pianist or an organist playing ghost music for ghosts, villain music for villains, and *Hearts and Flowers* for the tender scenes?"

Plays are different though, and here's why! Voices are amplified on the screen so that a love scene is as loud as a March wind and an angry scene as a tornado. Faces can be four feet wide. Everything is magnified. You can take a sixty piece band all blowing and scraping at the same time and let it pour over you and you don't miss a thing. But just try it in the theatre! The actors are far away. There are no close-ups. The voices are small and sometimes the actors have to speak as they are walking or turning their backs. A little

music goes a long way. In fact there is very little chance of playing music while the actors are speaking their lines unless you play it very softly. You want to watch them and you want to hear them. Thus music can be a nuisance. But notice this! When you *do* use music in a play, half the audience will realize it and some will remember it. How many movie audiences come out remembering any of the music they heard?

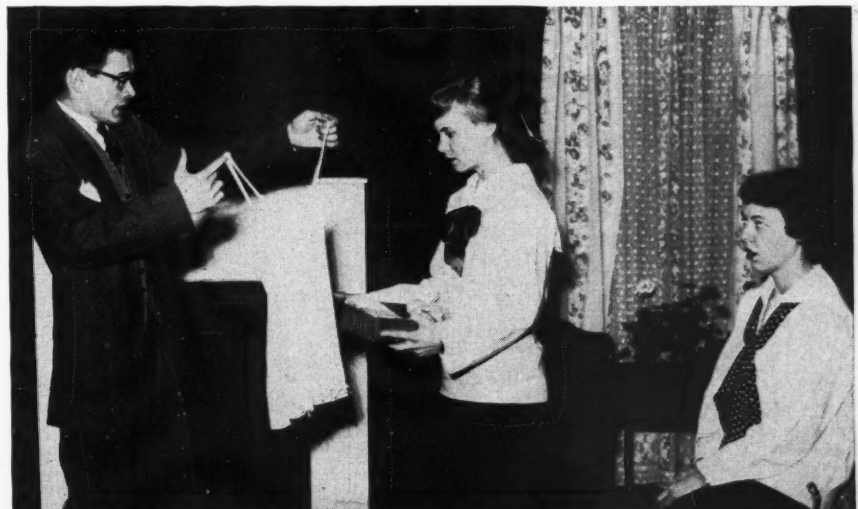
The less music you use the more noticeable it is; thus you have to be twice as careful about choosing it. If you choose unwisely, you can ruin the play in one three-minute scene. If you choose wisely, you can improve the play more than you ever thought was possible.

Sometimes the selection of the music in a play is done by the author, who tells you exactly what he wants and where he wants it. Since he wrote the play he probably knows best, though authors can make mistakes too.

In *Our Town*, Thornton Wilder asks for the hymn *Blessed Be the Tie That Binds*, and it is exactly right. Sometimes the latest dance hit is the right choice because of its associations, but if it is a dance hit the parents in the play are particularly fond of, it may be a dance hit of twenty years ago.

The author occasionally leaves it up

(Continued on page 34)



Midland, Mich., Senior High School's *Cheaper by the Dozen*. Leitha V. Perkins, Director and Sponsor of Troupe 902.

MUSICAL COMEDY QUEENS

By PAUL MYERS



Thespian Troupe 1122, Windber, Pa., High School, Margaret McLaughlin, Sponsor.



You Can't Take It with You, presented by the Kenmore, N. Y., Senior High School (Thespian Troupe 108), Eve Strong, Director.



Thespian Troupe 526, Union High School, Fruita, Colo., Mrs. John Britton, Sponsor.

READERS of DRAMATICS must be aware of my fondness for musical comedy and of my insistence that this phase of the theatre be treated seriously. For too long, productions of this type were catalogued as "shows for the tired business man" or "leg shows." America's greatest contribution to theatre has been its musical shows. In this fourth article in a series of discussions of the *Players of Today*, we shall examine the careers of some of the ladies who appear in musicals.

There is not a more individual talent on the stage today than Ethel Merman. Hers is not the beauty which is generally ascribed to a musical comedy queen. Compare Miss Merman to this mythical being and you will discover that she is a bit dumpier, that her features are not so dainty, that her voice is raspier and that her hair is not silky blonde. Yet turn Miss Merman loose upon the stage and no one in the audience can see anyone else. From the moment her tiny foot is poised inside the entrance, she holds everything in the theatre in the grasp of her personality and talent. An Ethel Merman production is her show—make no mistake about that. It's all her show and a devoted audience wouldn't want it any other way.

Another interesting characteristic of the Merman touch is her seeming versatility. Every part she plays is blared across the footlights in the self-same way. There is employed almost the same tricks of movement and gesture. The Merman stamp is indelible and stays put upon any part its possessor touches. Nonetheless the various persons portrayed by Ethel Merman seem, in retrospect at least, to be different people. Annie Oakley, Mrs. Sally Adams, Mme. Du Barry, Reno Sweeney, "Nails" Duquesne—all these ladies have a common creator but they all return to our mind's eye as different beings. It is one of the facets of Ethel Merman's talent I have not quite fathomed.

For over a year Miss Merman has been appearing in the role of Mrs. Sally Adams, the leading lady of *Call Me Madam*. It is common knowledge that this musical with a book by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse and a score

(Continued on page 32)

ACTING: MOTIVATION and CONCENTRATION

By JOHN W. HALLAUER

AFTER one has considered the problem of relaxation, there are two other concepts which are fundamental to any organized acting technique. These are motivation and concentration, in both of which amateur actors perhaps most often make their most serious mistakes.

Motivation

One of the things that will drive a director of amateur actors almost to despair is the way in which the actors about nine-tenths of the time that they are on the stage will give the impression of not belonging there at all, of being lost out in space and out of time. There are many causes for this, but one very important cause is inadequate motivation or the wrong kind of motivation.

The actor must have a reason for everything he does and says on the stage. Paradoxical as it sounds, he must even have a positive reason for saying or doing nothing, if that is what is called for. (Strictly speaking of course an actor cannot be doing or saying nothing. He must be actively listening, reacting or thinking *in character* every moment he is on stage, even if he is only providing background, or his character ceases to exist.) The director should insist that the actor knows what he is doing and why, what he is thinking and why, what he wants and why from the moment he enters the stage until he leaves it. This immediately tends to do away with much of the impression one often gets from amateurs that they are unsure and out of place on the stage.

Just as important as having a motivation is having the *right* motivation. And here the director meets his biggest problem. He must make his actors realize that motivations have to grow from the situation of the play and from the character being created. Motivations cannot be from the actor's standpoint, as long as he remains in his own person outside the play and the character. An illustration may make this clearer. The action is: to hear footsteps outside, to run across the room, to fling open a door, and to rush out. The actor may say to himself: "Now I (the actor) must hear footsteps; I must show that the person I am playing is afraid and wants to escape; I must run across the room, open the door, and get out as quickly as I can." This is motivation of a kind,

(Continued on page 30)



Thespian Troupe 1011, Unity Senior High School, Tolono, Ill., Lelah Wimmer, Sponsor.



My Sister Eileen, presented by Hampton, Va., High School (Thespian Troupe 300), William C. Kramer, Director.



Thespian Troupe 260, Big Creek High School, War, W. Va., Helen Kantor, Sponsor.

FATHER OF THE BRIDE

HEAVEN CAN WAIT

CUCKOOS ON THE HEARTH

GEORGE WASHINGTON SLEPT HERE

THE CURIOUS SAVAGE

THE MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER

ARSENIC AND OLD LACE

I REMEMBER MAMA

THE BARRETTS OF WIMPOLE STREET

LIFE WITH MOTHER

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU

YEARS AGO

RAMSHACKLE INN

LIFE WITH FATHER

DEAR RUTH

JENNY KISSED ME

MR. BARRY'S ETCHINGS

LOVE RIDES THE RAILS

STAGE DOOR

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16*

HARVEY

MY SISTER EILEEN

THE CURIOUS SAVAGE

New Comedy by John Patrick, author of *THE HASTY HEART* and *THE WILLOW AND I*

THE CURIOUS SAVAGE is already providing the answer to high schools looking for a fresh, charming and highly entertaining comedy. 40 groups — high schools, colleges and community theatres — have already produced this play in the last few weeks and every week adds to the total. The Lower Merion Senior High School of Ardmore, Pa., whose production will take place before this notice appears, wrote us:

"The cast and the entire production staff is thoroughly enjoying this play and find it most challenging and satisfying for a high school club to produce."

Here is a delightful and heartwarming play. The cast is 5 men and 6 women, and the setting one simple interior. Books 85c each. Fee, \$50.00 for the first, \$25.00 for each subsequent performance.

Mrs. Savage has been left ten million dollars by her husband, and wants to make the best possible use of it, in spite of the efforts of her grown-up step-children to get their hands on it. These latter, knowing that the widow has converted her wealth into negotiable securities, and seeing that they cannot get hold of a huge share of it, commit her to a "sanatorium," hoping to "bring her to her senses." But Mrs. Savage is determined to put her fortune to a noble and unselfish use: she will establish a fund to help others realize their hopes and dreams.

In the sanatorium she meets various social misfits, men and women who just cannot adjust themselves to life, people who need the help Mrs. Savage's money can provide. In getting to know them, she realizes that she will find happiness with them, and plans to spend the rest of her life as one of them. But when the doctor in charge tells her there is no reason at all why she should remain, she hesitates to go out into a hard, realistic world where people seem ready to do almost anything for money. The life she leads there is gracious, amusing and useful, while her new friends are interested in **her**, not in her money. Throughout the quick action of the comedy the self-seeking step-children are driven to distraction by their vain efforts to cajole, threaten and browbeat Mrs. Savage. The latter, however, preserves her equanimity and leads these step-children a merry chase. They get mixed up in all sorts of ridiculous mishaps, which end in complete frustration. At last her friends conspire to get rid of the in-laws, and through their simple belief in the justice of her cause, they help enable Mrs. Savage carry out her good intentions. She is eventually persuaded to leave the sanatorium and devote all her energies to the administration of her fund. The last scene, a farewell party before she leaves, is a delightful fantasy where each "guest" in the sanatorium realizes at last some hopeless dream for something he was never able to attain.

The dominating mood of the play is high comedy. Each of the characters is clearly portrayed, and the audience left with a feeling that somehow the neglected virtues of kindness and affection have not been entirely lost in a world that seems motivated at times only by greed and dishonesty.

Send for our new catalog, issued September, 1951. Free of charge on request.

DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, Inc.

14 East 38th Street, New York 16, New York



A scene from *Our Miss Brooks*, as presented by Thespian Troupe 35, Mainland High School, Daytona Beach, Florida, directed by Miss Dodson.

Staging

OUR MISS BROOKS

By BARBARA DODSON

OUR MISS BROOKS, a comedy in three acts, by Perry Clark, adapted from the original material by R. J. Mann. Twelve women and five men, modern costumes and setting — one interior. Royalty for one performance by amateurs, \$35.00. The Dramatic Publishing Company, 1706 Prairie Avenue, Chicago 16, Illinois.

Suitability

OUR MISS BROOKS is an excellent choice for senior high school students. Every situation in the play is so realistic and so like those experienced by the students in real life that they thoroughly understand and enjoy the interpretation of roles. The dialogue is snappy and natural. Even though humorous situations predominate, many lessons are slipped into the play with no idea of "preaching." Careful screening of the entire play reveals nothing offensive in the slightest detail.

This play appeals to all age groups and any type audience, for who has not been a student in his life! As a result of the story teen-agers, parents, teachers and any other adults will recognize problems and joys that have beset them at one time or another. All teachers will adore and sympathize with Miss Brooks. Many will identify themselves with characters in the play. In fact everyone will love *Our Miss Brooks*.

Plot

Our Miss Brooks is an English teacher who has a gift for being left with all the extra-curricular activities of the school. Because of her deep sense of fair play and right and her keen interest in the good of her students, she incurs the anger of Mrs. Allen, the president of the School Board, who expects every honor to be bestowed upon her daughter Rhonda. Miss Brooks gives the honors

to a talented nobody, Jane. She irritates the coach, a bachelor whom she wishes to impress, by having to use part of the gym to practice the play and by giving the male lead to Ted, the star basketball player. To complicate matters further, Miss Audubon, the music teacher, is outraged because Miss Brooks is directing the play. Everybody is in a frenzy over possible repercussions of these discussions and nobody underestimates them either. However, the problems reach amazing solutions in the end and Miss Brooks, having placated Mrs. Allen, produced the play and now looks forward to a more intimate relationship with the coach.

Casting

The greatest difficulty in casting *Our Miss Brooks* will be the lead role of Miss Brooks as she is the center of nearly every scene. A girl must be selected who can suggest more maturity and poise than those who play the student roles. She must be able to appear dignified yet handle her lines in an offhand manner.

To present a contrast we decided that each member of the faculty should portray a type. Thus Miss Audubon was a thin, nervous type, made up to look about 55, and Miss Finch was the striding, happy-go-lucky athletic type. The coach and principal present no problem as long as they are good actors. Mrs. Allen, the president of the School Board, must be a girl who wears clothes well. She must show promise of assuming a mature voice and the general attitude of one who is used to being obeyed.

As for the students, it is necessary to

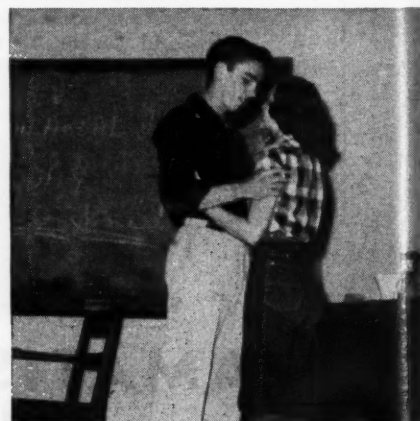
use careful discrimination or each one will appear a carbon copy of every other one. We worked especially for contrast to show up the different personalities. Jane and Ted should stand out. Luckily our Jane was beautiful and talented. Ted was the usual well-liked athlete. A girl with great poise and one who could easily assume an attitude of hauteur was chosen to play the role of Rhonda, the petted, selfish daughter of Mrs. Allen. With a large dramatics department no director should have trouble casting this play.

Directing

Because of the lively, true-to-life dialogue, this play moves along rapidly, thus presenting the director with few problems. The mood is easily developed from the opening scene, a typical schoolroom. The director must be careful not to allow the students to overplay or horseplay too much. The tempo changes with the scenes as there are a few serious scenes. The director must be alert to drill his cast on subtle lines and laugh lines. Unless this is done, much of the play will be lost in production. Because of the numerous dialogues throughout the play, the director must be certain to keep these scenes from becoming the "I speak then you speak" scenes so often found in high school dramatics. It is imperative to direct each scene with complete sincerity whether it be humorous or serious.

Stage Problems

With the exception of the door URC, we used the floor plan as suggested in the play book. To make the room quite typical we painted the flats the pale green so often found in Florida schoolrooms. With the addition of bulletin boards, posters on Book Week, and a pencil sharpener our room looked complete. The only possible problem here may be the blackboard as it is necessary to make it look fastened to the wall rather than on a stand. Any piece of schoolroom furniture or property will add to the scene. We used a huge rubber spider such as students frequently



Another scene from Miss Dodson's *Our Miss Brooks*.

CHILDREN'S THEATRE MANUAL

A Guide for the Organization and Operation
of a Community Children's Theatre

compiled by

SEATTLE JUNIOR PROGRAMS, INC.

This is a very practical booklet, which answers a long-felt need in the Children's Theatre field. It offers detailed advice on how to create and maintain a Children's Theatre organization for your community, compiled by one of the most distinguished Children's Theatres in America, from its wide background of experience. Illustrated.

CHAPTER HEADINGS

1. Definition and Reason for Theatre for Children
2. Organizational Procedures for Setting up a Children's Theatre
3. Membership — Classes of Membership
4. Program — Sources and Choice of Productions
5. Public Relations, Promotion, and Publicity
6. Suggestions for Use of Co-related Educational Material
7. Financing, Budgeting, and Tax Information
8. Suggestions for Ticket-Selling
9. The Theatre and the Audience — Audience Behavior
10. Related Interests

Appendix I. By-Laws of Seattle Junior Programs, Inc.

Appendix II. Rules for Chaperones

Appendix III. List of Publishing Houses and Organizations That Offer Children's Theatre Material

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enjoy using to frighten "teacher."

During the second and third acts, properties such as costumes and props for *Lost Horizon*, a spotlight, a bicycle and flats were spread all over the room.

One might find a problem in the placing of desks. We found that the students' desks should be placed in staggered rows and almost facing the audience.

Lighting

There are no special lighting problems. We used regular bright straw, blue and whites overhead and in the footlights. The spotlight used in Act Two must be connected backstage in

order for Stanley to turn it on and off on stage as called for.

Make-Up

Make-up problems are limited to Miss Audubon (as we presented her) and the Tibetans. We used straight juvenile make-up for all students, a few lines for Miss Brooks, Miss Finch and the Coach; lines and grey temples for Mr. Wadsworth, and lines and a distinguishing white streak of hair for Mrs. Allen. We completely whitened Miss Audubon's hair with shoe polish and gave her many lines. For the Tibetans we used oriental grease paint and exaggerated eyebrows with lines to give eyes slanting appear-

ance. All make-up was done by the regular student make-up committee.

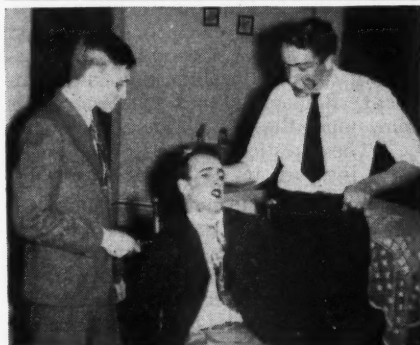
Costuming

The students under Miss Brooks' direction are in the midst of casting, producing and presenting *Lost Horizon* as their class play. This calls for three costumes, one for Lo-Tsen, the exquisite Chinese girl, one for the Tibetan serving girl, and a richly embroidered robe for the High Lama. Rhonda plays Lo-Tsen, Doris the Tibetan serving girl, and Martin the High Lama. However, because of his having an attack of appendicitis at the last minute, Martin has to turn

(Continued on page 28)



A scene from *Cheaper by the Dozen*, as presented by the Stonewall Jackson High School (Thespians Troupe 121), Charleston, W. Va.



Morris Schmiedt, Darwin Larsen and Laurence Kappenman in a scene from *Arsenic and Old Lace*, produced by Thespians Troupe 989, Centerville, So. Dak., High School, Kristen Solberg, Sponsor.



Marguerita Michel, Clarence Eldred and DeWayne Franzen in a scene from *Charley's Aunt*, produced at Mt. Morris, Mich., High School (Thespians Troupe 673), Barbara Jean White, Director.

DIALING AROUND

By SI MILLS

On The Air

OZZIE NELSON, who may well have been called an average boy, has always demonstrated a jack-of-all-trades ability. But whereas most fellows with that sort of ability tend to jump from chore to chore, thereby earning the additional epithet of "master of none," this boy was different. At the age of 13 he was the country's youngest Eagle Scout and represented the United States in the first Boy Scout Jamboree at London, England. Later, on a visit to the Olympic Games at Antwerp, Belgium, he sang before the late King Albert. Several years later he started to attend Rutgers University, where he was quarterback on the football team, welter-weight boxing champ and topflight performer on the swimming and lacrosse teams. Besides those achievements, he organized a dance band, studied law, and earned extra money by coaching a high school football team.

But attending law school — and receiving his degree — was accomplished primarily for the satisfaction of his father. Actually the idea of wielding a baton was more alluring than practicing before the bar. So, less than a year after being graduated, Ozzie organized a band and began to tour the country. By 1933 he was on radio with the late Joe Penner, and has been on the air every year since. If you'd never heard of Ozzie Nelson as a band leader, it is probably that his popularity was at its peak in the "thirties." Ask almost any jazz enthusiasts of the early and middle "thirties" and they'll tell you Ozzie Nelson's was one of the two most popular bands of the day. (The other was Rudy Vallee's.)

Harriet Hilliard, who is Mrs. Nelson in real life, was almost as popular at the same time because she was the vocalist with Ozzie's band. What most people don't know is that she had had several dramatic successes in stock companies and years of vocal training. In fact the vaudeville career that followed included appearances with such stars as Bert Lahr and Ken Murray. Ozzie met Harriet on the set of a motion picture short and signed her on as vocalist with his band. Shortly after that they were



Weekly rehearsals are serious business to the members of the Nelson family, sons David and Rickey, as well as Ozzie and Harriet. That is one reason for the continuing success of the domestic comedy series, now in its second year on the ABC radio network.

married, beginning to operate as a real team, touring the country, appearing in each of the 48 states.

One wonders if this touring of whistle stops and sleeper jumps, this business of living on the run, didn't give birth to the idea of a domestic comedy program. It may be fairly easy to trace the growth of a desire for a permanent home — a desire that finally found fulfillment in a New England style house in California. Having two sons helped these astute entertainers see the possibilities for a domestic comedy routine.

A prime requirement of any kind of entertainment is that the audience be able to identify itself with it. You have to be able — even if only subconsciously — to tell yourself that you know just such a character as the one being portrayed. Maybe the expression "just such a character" is not right. Actually every successful character or situation is a composite. You may not know a single family, let us say, with members, acquaintances and experiences like the Nelsons, but put together your many acquaintances and you reach a sum total of what the Nelson family brings you. It is necessary to realize of course that this offering is not a complete total because it does not include pathos or sentiment. Remember that the program is going under the title of "domestic comedy." The question to ask is whether or not it lives up to its aim.

The answer is an unqualified "yes." It revolves about the exploits of a single family and it keeps you laughing. Of course any good comedian keeps you laughing, thereby complying with the second requirement. But he is hardly a family. More than that, the ordinary comedian relies on formula comedy; that is, he will find the gag-line that draws a big laugh from his audience, and then he will repeat the line from

time to time until he has milked the gag for all he can possibly get from it.

That is where Ozzie and Harriet are different. Their method is not that at all. Each situation brings its own punch-lines, each good for a hearty laugh in the situation being enacted at the moment. Next week it will not be used because it will no longer apply. That means that there is always fresh material being brought to the audience, that although you meet the same characters — with minor exceptions — you are not given the chance to become weary of standardization.

This is a touch of realism that is highly important, since it makes the characters more human, less comedians who are up in front with the avowed purpose of making you laugh. Every person uses a comic line over and over again, but he uses it for a very limited time. Then he discards it, not knowingly perhaps, but he does discard it. There may be widely-spaced intervals of re-use of the line, but it isn't a constant usage. Unlike the boxer, who only has two hands to use for effect, the comedian must have widely varied changes of pace he can use.

What is more, the Nelsons have an added advantage. Instead of the adults hogging the gags, they are more frequently the "straight men" for the two boys who play — and actually are — their sons, David and Ricky. This sharing of the spotlight not only engenders warmth, but is an attraction to those grown-ups — and they are legion — who are willing to admit that children often say cute and endearing things. And so is added not only more realism, but the "change of pace" that makes you want to keep going back for more.

The Ozzie and Harriet Nelson family has it, and they're making good use of it.

Commercials

Being confined to bed for several days with a mild cold has been a swell chance for me to catch up on my radio listening, both daytime and evening. The most outstanding part of what is offered is the advertising. That's the idea supposedly. The sponsors are picking up the check, and they want you to know it. Undoubtedly their method is paying off, because it is not only continuing, but is increasing in intensity. You can't have your set on for more than a few minutes without being bombarded with singing commercials, offers of prizes for telling your reasons for feeding your family "Katzenheimer's dog food," or some announcer telling you in no uncertain terms why it is better to be buried in "Imperial Caskets." If the practice were not paying off, the sponsors would not be paying off as they are. And then where would we be?

We might have to resort to nationalized radio such as is used in England. (This column is not intended to go into

THE SCHOOL OF SPEECH
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
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THE NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL INSTITUTE
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About 100 high school students who have completed their junior year will be selected from those who apply for admission to attend the Twenty-second Annual Institute. Character, scholarship, and evidence of special ability and interest in speech — **public speaking and debate, dramatics, or radio** — will be considered in determining admission.

- **Public Speaking and Debate** — about 35 students; basic instruction in the principles of public speech and their applications in debate, oratory, declamation, and extempore speaking.
- **Dramatics** — about 35 students; basic instruction in acting, directing, stagecraft, and participation in plays.
- **Radio** — about 25 students; radio broadcasting techniques and their application in the production of radio programs.

All students are housed in dormitories under the supervision of experienced counselors. Instruction is given by members of the staff of the School of Speech. Trips to points of interest in the Chicago Metropolitan area and various social functions are planned. A University beach on Lake Michigan, the University Library — these and other facilities are offered to provide five weeks of study in a pleasant and stimulating environment.

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**Dr. Karl F. Robinson, Director, N. H. S. I., School of Speech, Northwestern University
Evanston, Illinois**

the pro's and con's of such broadcasting.) Or commercial radio may have to be brought to an understanding of the fact that it is overstepping its limits. That is of course if I'm not hollering before I'm hurt.

The broadcaster may be restrained from excessive airing of sales matter by regulation of the Federal Communications Commission, but there have been loopholes in the law. For instance, only a certain number of minutes in a specified sponsored time may be devoted legally to advertising the sponsoring product. One of the ways around that regulation has been the use of the "hitch hiker." This name is applied when a product other than the one supposedly paying for the program, and made by the same sponsor, is given a few sentences — or even a few words — of air time. How many times have you heard the "XYZ Cake Mix" program sign off with "Try ABC Shortening for better results in your baking?" There is an example of a "hitch hiker."

Another one is the use of "spot announcements." These "spots" may be 15, 30 or 60 seconds long, and are sandwiched in between two regular broadcasts. The makers of "Rancid Coffee" might have a 60-second "spot" that has nothing at all to do with the show that went before and nothing to do with the one you are about to hear. All three are independent. And as a result, you have

to listen to three commercials in a row, the first cautioning you not to forget the makers of "Lead Wate Donuts," who have just brought you fifteen minutes of world and local news. Then there is the "spot" for "Rancid Coffee." Then you are told about "John's Branflakes," which brings you "John's Other . . ." But first a message from our sponsor . . .

But the most annoying (at least to me) circumvention of the law is the so-called "Shopper's Guide." It is palmed off on the listener as being a listing of where-to-get-it, and at what price. In the newspapers such information would be found under "Classified Advertising." And that's what it is. "Shopper's Guide" indeed! Wasn't it Shakespeare who said something about "a rose by any other name . . .?"

The "Guide" is nothing more than fifteen consecutive minutes of ads, telling you that you can get such-and-such a product at so-and-so's store for a certain price. There is no attempt at masquerade in the form of having someone looking for the item, and then finding it located at a particular store. No, that would be time-consuming, and time on radio is money. So, instead you are inflicted with what I choose to consider a form of torture.

The problem has ceased — in a way — to be purely local. In this area, Tucson, Arizona, there are five radio stations: KVOA, KCNA, KTUC, KOPO and

KTKT. Each is the outlet for a network: National, American, Mutual, Columbia and Liberty Broadcasting systems respectively. That does not necessarily mean that the companies own the stations. It may only entail an affiliation. But it does mean that at least tacitly the "nets" are condoning the activity if they maintain relations with such practitioners.

The networks may counter with the argument that one can hardly expect them to cut their nose to spite their face. What the local station does on its own is its business just as long as it doesn't commit the sins on network time. Such an argument may be acceptable except that the listener is not involved in the same way. He knows that the — Broadcasting Company is represented locally by Radio Station — and it is of little importance that the chain is not openly sanctioning a certain activity. They are certainly tolerating it.

And the problem is not confined to radio. Television has been an apt pupil. At least with radio there are escape mechanisms. People have learned — to a great degree — to hear without listening. In television, however, the audience is more captive, especially as looking at television programs is still a novelty. But once the novelty has gone, the viewer will learn to turn his set off and leave it off. If that isn't cutting off your nose, I don't know what is.

THE theatre hereabouts is looking up! It is quite amazing how much sunnier just one or two solid hits make the entire Broadway scene. Within the past several days a few productions have given the theatre stature.

It will not be disputed that the outstanding dramatist of the first half of the twentieth century has been George Bernard Shaw. His genius was too great to be confined within the limitations set by the stage so his tremendous energies spilled over into other types of literary expression as well as into politics, social reform, music, the pictorial arts. No phase of human existence indeed escaped his attention. His interests might seem terribly scattered and dilettantish were it not that he brought such clarity of mind and direction to all of his varied projects.

Shaw subtitled his *Saint Joan* a "Chronicle Play." In his Preface to the play (to which I called attention in last month's article) Shaw warns us: "... I have taken care to let the medieval atmosphere blow through my play freely. Those who see it performed will not mistake the startling event it records for a mere personal accident." Sitting before the present production, I have no fear of that. Under the sensitive direction of Margaret Webster and with Uta Hagen as the Maid of Orleans, the Theatre Guild's 1951 production of *Saint Joan* is great theatre.

The premiere production of Shaw's play was presented under Theatre Guild auspices on December 2, 1923. Winifred Lenihan essayed the title role. The first London production took place the following March with Sybil Thorndike as Joan. These two performances will always hold a place of honor among enactors of the role. The first production of the play that I had the good

THEATRE

on

BROADWAY

By PAUL MYERS

fortune to see was the one starring Katherine Cornell in 1936. This production—directed by Guthrie McClintic and designed by Jo Mielziner—was more beautiful pictorially than the current one, but this one has much greater spiritual qualities than Miss Cornell's. Miss Hagen convinces one of the validity of her visions almost immediately. Her rabid enthusiasm which she communicates to Robert de Baudricourt in the opening scene undergoes changes through the course of the play, but the spirituality of the character remains steadfast. That should be the keynote of Joan and Miss Hagen communicates it most forcefully.

The cast surrounding Miss Hagen merits commendation. John Buckmaster essays the difficult role of the Dauphin and manages to catch the niceties of the part. In his first appearance in the second scene of the play, he says of himself: "I want to hear no more of my grandfather. He was so wise that he used up the whole family stock of wisdom for five generations, and left me the poor fool I am, bullied and insulted by all of you." He is, however, imperious too and dominating. He has been played as effeminate all too often. Mr. Buckmaster

avoids this pitfall and makes the Dauphin just such a person as Shaw depicted.

Andrew Cruickshank plays the Earl of Warwick. Frederic Worlock is seen as the Archbishop of Rheims, and Frederick Rolfe does a remarkable job as the Inquisitor—all the more so when one realizes that this aged cleric is a young actor. The scenery is adequate though one is aware of a certain paucity in one or two places. I would much prefer richness in the acting (as in the present instance) than that the funds be dispensed in furnishing the stage with inanimate objects. Miss Webster, Uta Hagen and the Theatre Guild deserve a word of thanks from all lovers of good theatre. The *Saint Joan* is a must.

Christopher Fry has been one of the most discussed playwrights of the post-World War II theatre. His plays have become widely known both in the English theatre and in the United States. His greatest success, heretofore, on this side of the Atlantic has been *The Lady's Not for Burning*, in which John Gielgud and Pamela Brown appeared. We have also seen his *A Phoenix Too Frequent* and his adaptation from the French of Jean Anouilh, *Ring Round the Moon*. Rex Harrison and Lilli Palmer are readying a production of his *Venus Observed*, in which Laurance Olivier and Vivien Leigh have already appeared in London.

Mr. Fry's *A Sleep of Prisoners* was written to be performed in a church during the Festival of Britain. The local production was performed in St. James' Church in much the same way as the British production. As I write, the final local performance (it had been announced as a limited run) is taking place. *A Sleep of Prisoners* is about to undertake a tour of the United States and Canada. I hope that many of you will have the privilege of seeing it on this tour.

The play was presented here by Luther Greene as a non-profit venture. An interesting programme note informs "The American and Canadian production of *A Sleep of Prisoners* is owned and controlled by Francitas Film Foundation, Inc., a non-profit making, non-sectarian organization for the production of educational and religious films and plays. Mr. Green has assigned the producer's share of profits to the Foundation for future productions." The Rector of St. James' assigned the church's share "to the Episcopal Bishop of New York to create a fund to improve conditions among underpaid missionary clergy." The sponsors too assigned their profits to several religious and social agencies.

The most recent is the most interesting of Mr. Fry's plays to have come our way. It has the philosophic depth I found so lacking in the other works and a much surer dramatic technique. The church setting is genuine and indigenous, not a

(Continued on page 27)



Stanley Baker, Hugh Pryse, Donald Harron and Leonard White in a scene from Christopher Fry's *A Sleep of Prisoners*.



Art Houser, manager of the Studio Club at 20th Century-Fox.

HOW do you keep the employees of a big company happy and contented in their jobs? A large part of the answer to that question at 20th Century-Fox is the employee-relations program directed by the manager of the Studio Club. The club's varied and extensive activities, involving over 3200 workers at the Fox Hills studio in Beverly Hills, are guided by energetic Art Houser. Houser was schooled to practice law but passed up a legal career for the more attractive, and less lucrative, opportunity to help his fellow-workers to live fuller lives, on and off the lot.

It's a big order, but it's an order that gets filled; the results are felt throughout the studio. While the club and its program do not lie within the field of production activity, it is quickly apparent to the more-than-casual visitor that the wheels of production at 20th are oiled by the good relations among employees, and between them and their employers.

A sweeping survey of the club's functions would include discount purchasing services; suggestion contests, with cash awards for time and money-saving ideas; safety campaigns; a welfare fund to supplement the industry's excellent relief program; family parties and picnics; several sports tournaments, including golf, softball and basketball; deep-sea fishing expeditions and "county fair" festivals; classes in shorthand and courses in photography, television and rod casting; art exhibits and hobby shows; doll-dressing contests, with the dolls donated after judging to the most needy children's home; and, three or four times a year, productions of plays in the little theatre. The list is literally endless, for while some activities are traditional and are conducted annually, new ones crop up each year.

Art Houser came to 20th Century-Fox in 1933, not long after his graduation from law school. Those were the job-hunting days of the depression. After a brief try in advertising, Houser landed

an inconspicuous place at the studio. He has been there ever since, working in various departments and finally taking the Studio Club post just five years ago. Of all the jobs he has done for 20th his current one fits him best.

Even when he was working in publicity, according to one of his co-workers in that department, he was spending half his time looking out for fellow-employees. Once, when a studio laborer needed emergency hospitalization, it was Art Houser who saw that he got to the hospital; and it was Art Houser who chauffeured the man's wife to see her husband there every day. The concern he showed then for the internal welfare of the firm has been tapped in his present position to benefit the entire studio family.

There is no sentimentality in his approach to his job. One of the club's most active members, Frank Brown from draperies, dropped into the club office while I was there. Brown, a strong union man, testified to the real benefits that derive from the club's functions. There is no attempt here to substitute good-will for cash. The motion picture industry is as highly unionized as any other industry in the country — less than one per cent of the employees belong to no union — yet the relations between the club and organized labor are unstrained. "Service to all" is realistically implemented without interference with the established responsibilities of the unions. Art Houser recalled an illustrative incident that occurred during a strike in the paint department: a meeting of the club "stewards" was held off the lot, contrary to usual practices, in order that two striking members could attend!

These "stewards" are the nerves of the 20th family of employees. The idea, borrowed from the labor unions, provides

SCREEN

FAMILY of WORKERS

By H. KENN CARMICHAEL

a group of 72 employee representatives who are a true cross-section of the interests and needs of over three thousand workers and their families. There is continual change in the make-up of this strong nucleus so that all departments and sections are faithfully represented. An annual social get-together brings them into contact with the executives of the firm.

Top governing body of the club is the Board of Controllers, a group of 27 men and women elected by ballots cast by members. An indication of the club's unity and solidity is the fact that the percentage of voting members is high — much higher than that of voting citizens in the public elections of Los Angeles.

A further indication of unity can be seen in the fact that although membership in the club is strictly voluntary, over 97 per cent of 20th employees are members who have willingly paid the modest annual fee of three dollars. This is almost double the normal expectancy in voluntary employee organizations of this nature. Even more significant is average contribution of members to the Permanent Charities, 90 per cent of which is ear-marked for Community Chest use. The average contribution by workers only, exclusive of depart-

(Continued on page 26)

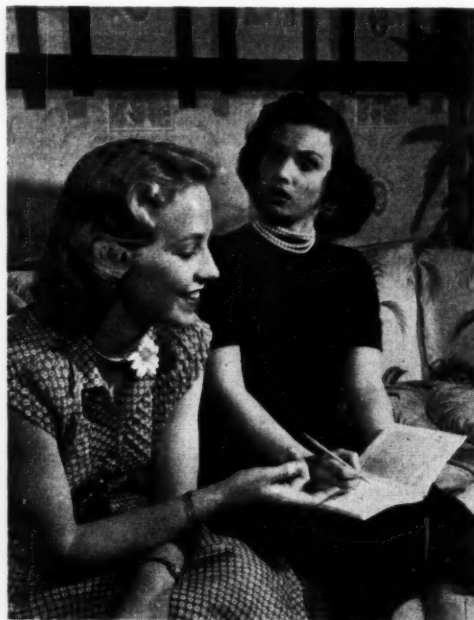


Ah, *Wilderness*, by Eugene O'Neill, produced by Studio Club at 20th and presented to employees, their families and friends. At the extreme right is Patricia Houser, daughter of the club's manager.

A NEW COMEDY HIT!

Meet **CORLISS** **ARCHER**

A 3-act comedy for 8w, 4m, 1 int. Dramatized by Christopher Sergel from Mr. F. Hugh Herbert's book.



This is one of the most enchanting comedies we've offered in almost seventy years of play publishing. The play brings with it an auditorium-filling national reputation, exciting and interest-holding roles for your cast, a single setting as simple or elaborate as you care to make it, and a thoroughly enjoyable evening for your audience. The fun is often uproarious, though at times the situation is almost serious and quite moving. There is no play we recommend more highly than this wholesome, worthwhile comedy.

CORLISS: Take this—"Dear diary. No one knows how ghastly it is to be living in a home that is seething with hatred and degradation!"

THE DRAMATIC

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CORLISS ARCHER, the delightful young heroine created by F. Hugh Herbert, has appeared on Broadway, in motion pictures, on television, and is heard on an outstanding national radio program. It's with genuine pride that we present this new play, and invite you to **MEET CORLISS ARCHER**.

STORY Corliss, busy with a homework character sketch of her mother, is so bored she could scream. She feels everyone is in a terrible rut — especially boyfriend Dexter. As Corliss is pestering her father for a rhyme for "tenderness" to go in what is now a poem in praise of her mother, the object of this devotion enters purposefully. She's just had word that her Cousin Agnes, an especially nosy and disagreeable relative, is about to arrive. Agnes will stay in Corliss' room, and it's a mess. Because of this untidiness, Mother cracks down and won't let Corliss go on her date tonight. Corliss starts to re-do the character sketch of her mother, but instead of "tenderness," she is now wondering if "cold-blooded" should be hyphenated, and if there are two r's in "tyranny"! When her parents exit, Corliss decides to make up a fake diary — not her *actual* dull, dull life, but an imaginary existence that would curl anyone's hair. She writes up her actually temperate father as though he were a raving alcoholic who beats his wife. Not satisfied with this, she describes gentle Dexter as a juvenile delinquent who forces vile drinks down her protesting throat. (Actually, all he's ever given her was a vitamin preparation.) Dexter hurries in to see Corliss, and she pretends she just isn't interested in going on their date. Dexter is goaded into pretending he's a tough, rough character. At this moment, Cousin Agnes walks in, and is shocked at what she hears. She exits to tell Corliss' parents. Dexter is frantic because he's already in bad. (He took the blame for getting Corliss home late recently when she insisted on sitting through a long movie twice.) Dexter misunderstands Corliss' attempt to apologize, and angrily (and unhappily) stalks off to the movie with Mildred. Corliss realizes this is her own fault, but before she can straighten it out, Cousin Agnes gets hold of Corliss' fake diary — *and believes it's true!* She's sure Mr. Archer is a dangerous drunk, and when Mrs. Archer comes in with her hand to her face (she has a slight toothache), Cousin Agnes thinks Mr. Archer has been beating her! As for Dexter — she has *proof* he's a delinquent! When Dexter is confronted with the charge that he's been forcing drinks on Corliss, he thinks they refer to the vitamin preparation and *admits it!* The horrified parents tell Dexter never to set foot in their house again! No one will listen to explanations, and Corliss is surprised to find how miserable she is at the separation. She also has a pain in her side and they decide to rush her to the hospital to check for appendicitis. She calls to the banished Dexter, but he's ordered to stay away. As the second act curtain falls, Corliss exits for the hospital, while heartbroken Dexter calls anxiously after her from off right. From the poignance of two young people deeply fond of each other, and separated at the crisis, the third act moves swiftly and skillfully to comedy once more, and to an ingenious, thoroughly satisfying, and at times, hilarious finale.

Royalty, \$35.00

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Brief comments from some of the directors who have already produced this play.

"An audience cannot help going home with a jubilant feeling."
Gloria Snyder, Manchester High School, Pa.

"Excellent! Many said it was the best play they had ever seen produced here."
Mendota High School, Illinois

"It was liked extremely well by a large and appreciative audience. The cast appreciated the humor in both lines and situations as much as the audience did. They enjoyed the play immensely."

Lucille Palin, High School, Indiana



Corliss unwittingly changes Dexter from a boy with a bouquet for her, to someone who's off to the movies with another girl.



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Thespian Troupe 875, Meridian, Idaho, High School, Kathryn Morgan, Sponsor.



Smilin' Through, presented by Thespian Troupe 1070, Columbian High School, Tiffin, Ohio, Mary Herron, Sponsor.



Admirable Crichton, presented by the Robbinsdale, Minn., High School (Thespian Troupe 352), Bess Sinnott, Director.



Thespian Troupe 87, Sterling, Colo., High School, John Browning, Sponsor.

THESPIAN

CHATTER

By Our
Student
Thespians

Charleston, West Virginia (Thespian Troupe 121)

The greatest financial stage success in our school's history was this year's Junior Class play, *Cheaper by the Dozen*. It was followed by the Troupers' production of *The Bishop's Mantle*, also a new play. Climaxing the year was *Our Miss Brooks*, presented by the Senior Class. In cooperation with the State Department of Mental Hygiene, the one-act play *Ins and Outs*, was presented for our student body, two junior high schools and the Parent-Teacher Association. Ten new members were initiated. Caroline George Beddow and Roy Bunting received the Best Thespian Award. Helen Rankin and Adaline Marshall were Star Thespians.—*Rochelle Cashdan, Troupe Reporter*

Fort Stockton, Texas (Thespian Troupe 33)

Excitement mounted as curtain time drew near. Our first children's play, *Hansel and Gretel*, was our main project for the year. It had to be successful. As the curtain opened, the delighted comments from the audience confirmed our wishes as far as the set was concerned. The play itself received "rave" notices from both townspeople and visitors. Our very small stage had 8 trees, a gingerbread house, and a woodcutter's shed—all constructed of scrap lumber, chicken wire, and newspapers. Green cedar was donated by local ranchers. Total expenditures amounted to \$50, and we cleared \$60.—*Mary Resley, Secretary*

Wayne, Michigan (Thespian Troupe 670)

Who can explain the thrill, excitement, and glamor of producing a play? When the house lights are dimmed and the curtain raised, the hard work of production is forgotten in the breathtaking realization of a "first night." The kids at Wayne High know just such a feeling. Many have experienced the thrills in presenting a performance. In the fall of 1950, the Senior Class presented the popular play entitled *Cheaper by the Dozen*. Then came the winter season and the Christmas play, *Dust of the Road*—arena style (our first venture in that medium). Next, the evening of one-act plays which in-

cluded *Smokescreen*, *For Whom the Telephone Rings* and *Fog on the Valley*. In the spring the Junior Class presented a clever, new comedy entitled *Men Are Like Streetcars*. *Smokescreen* was again given as the Festival Play. Yes, it has been a wonderful year. Our troupe initiated twenty-two members and finished the year with the annual banquet. There we were proud to announce four Honor Thespians: Ruth Ramsburg (Best Thespian), Tom Green, Sonie LeBaron and Carol Parr.—*Gina Fama, Secretary*

Benton Harbor, Michigan (Thespian Troupe 455)

A banner year for Barrymore Troupe No. 455 began in September with a chartered trip to Chicago to see Katharine Hepburn in *As You Like It* and radio shows. November found Thespians donning Victorian costumes and wigs for *Great Expectations*. A Christmas pageant and dinner party with unique paper hat creations were features of December. Thespians celebrated International Theatre Month and their tenth anniversary in March with a radio clinic presenting *Blind Brothers*, and climaxing the day with a formal banquet and candlelight ceremony with Shakespearean quotations for each year. The classic operetta, *Sweethearts*, was the highlight of March. May climaxed the histrionic arts with a Drama Day tea program of one acts: *And the Villain Still Pursued Her*, and *Have You Had Your Operation* and the senior play *People Are Funny*. 44 radio shows highlighted the year with a special series of *Twin City Civic Problems* with public officials participating over station WHFB.—*Emery George, Secretary*

Reading, Pennsylvania (Thespian Troupe 416)

1950-51 was a year of strengthening National Thespians in Reading High School. A monthly newspaper was published. The annual playwriting contest was successfully sponsored and International Theater Month was celebrated in an assembly program. In addition, extensive plans have been made for the Eastern District Convention of National Thespians to be held at Reading Senior High School, April 4 and 5, 1952.

Troupe members participated actively in school productions of *A Child Is Born*, *Charley's Aunt*, student-written one-acts, *The Opening of a Door* and Victor Herbert's *Sweethearts*. With the enthusiasm built this year, Troupe 416 will begin the year of 1951 with twenty-two active members. — *Bonnie Stout, Reporter*

Marked Tree, Arkansas (Thespian Troupe 301)

Thespian Troupe 301 chose the following subjects for the year: Mechanics of the Theatre, Theatre Background and History, and The Legitimate Stage. We purchased *A Pictorial History of our American Theatre 1900-1950*, by David

(Continued on page 33)



Officers of Thespian Troupe 1143, Nevada, Iowa, High School, Phyllis Lyders, Sponsor.



Junior Miss, Thespian Troupe 501, Salinas, Calif., Union High School, Barbara Rowley, Director.



White Iris, Lebanon, Ind., High School, Thespian Troupe 714, Margaret Hecker, Director.



Photo by Torrance Herald.

Troupe 1133, Torrance, Calif., High School, Desmond Wedberg, Sponsor.

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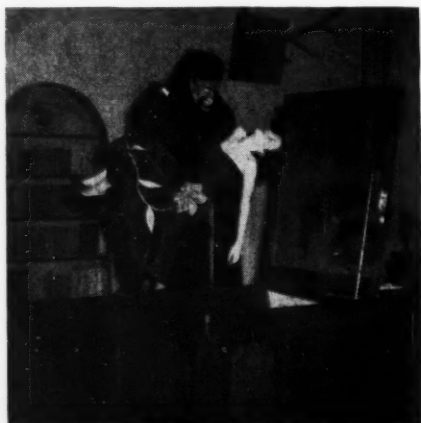
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CHATTER

(Continued from page 21)

Blum. Nine one-act plays were presented April 5. The winning play, *The Undercurrent*, by Faye Ehlert, again won first place at the State Drama Festival April 14. Two of its players, Doris Jean Walker and Robert Finch, won best female and male character parts. Our annual banquet and initiation was on May 17. We welcomed twenty-one new members and three honorary members.—Mary Lois Youngblood, Secretary



The Gorilla, presented by Thespian Troupe 210, Topeka, Kan., High School, Gertrude Wheeler, Director.

Cedar Rapids, Iowa (Thespian Troupe 561)

Our activities for the year began with the initiation of eight members into National Thespians. Our fall play, *Seventeenth Summer*, was well received. March was a busy month—a Thespian program of one acts, UNESCO assembly program, city festival and festival at the University of Iowa. Our troupe president rated a "superior" at Iowa. In April we joined troupes from Wilson and McKinley and attended the performance of *Major Barbara* at the University Theatre. We next presented *She Stoops to Conquer* and ended the year with a formal dinner and initiation. — Helen Shippe, Secretary-Treasurer.

Portland, Oregon (Thespian Troupe 913)

This year has been an active one for Troupe 913. In the Fall we gave a three-act play *Cheaper by the Dozen*. In October we gave a one-act "United Nations Day" play for the school.

Since the beginning of the year, Thespians have been working with our school's dramatics club. Masque and Dagger. We have divided this club into five groups. A Thespian acts as chairman of each group, and is responsible for getting the group to meet outside of school time. A week is assigned to each group at which time they are to give entertainment to the rest of the club.

JANUARY 2-31
**GIVE Voluntarily TO
MARCH OF DIMES**

The groups also have other projects such as writing scripts, mending properties, or making posters for the advertising of plays and dances. Every other Wednesday night our troupe takes volunteer entertainment to different hospitals and old people's homes. On April 6 we put on our Spring play, *Our Miss Brooks*.—Eleanore Anne Burns, Secretary

Sikeston, Missouri (Thespian Troupe 1075)

The spring induction service for new members was held at an assembly of the entire school on April 10, 1951. Twenty-six members, those who became eligible for membership during the school year 1950-51, were inducted into the troupe. In connection with the service, members of the Thespian troupe presented the play, *Strange Guest*. Thespians John Matthews, Fielding Potashnick, James Limbaugh, Carolyn Corlew, and Barbara Lennox were in the cast. Thespian co-sponsor, Robert Walker, prepared and directed the play as a part of the regular work in the dramatics class which he teaches. Under the direction of Martha Howard Jones, co-sponsor of Troupe 1075, the officers, Sue Sikes, president; Barbara Lennox, vice president; Sally Sadler, secretary; and Pat Hazel, treasurer, had charge of the formal induction service. — Thespian Reporter

Ypsilanti, Michigan (Thespian Troupe 789)

Our Thespian Troupe, sponsored by Miss Madge Iseminger, began the school year of 1950-51 with seven members. Due to the fact that four major productions were presented throughout the year, the club membership totaled fifty at the end of the year. One hundred and fifty students earned points toward Thespian membership by participating in the following plays: *Cheaper by the Dozen*, *Love Is Too Much Trouble*, *The*

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Hither and Thither of Danny Dither, Fog on the Valley, and The Dragon That Giggled. Two formal initiations were held to bring these people into the society. To close the year, a one-act play festival was presented in the Ypsilanti High School Auditorium in which the six schools in the 6B League participated. A critique was given at the end of the festival by W. T. Hunt (Michigan State Normal College) which helped the dramatic students to find the good points as well as the bad points of their performances. Social activities were also included in the troupe's program consisting of theater parties to *I Know My Love* (The Lunts), *As You Like It* (Katharine Hepburn), *Romeo and Juliet* (Olivia DeHaviland) and The University of Michigan Theater Clinic.—Ann Lurkins, President

Toccoa Falls, Georgia
(Thespians Troupe 761)

A very unusual and interesting program was presented at Toccoa Falls Institute on March 2, 1951, when three one-act plays were given by the Thespians. Because of limited facilities (fire having destroyed the auditorium) these plays were given three times each, at three different places and all at the same time. The members of the audience, divided according to the color of their tickets, moved from place to place to see the plays, which were done in classrooms with minimum scenery and no special lighting. *Rehearsal*, *Tardy April* and *Rich Man, Poor Man* were big successes for all who attended.—Eleanor Jeunnette, Reporter

Alton, Illinois
(Thespians Troupe 397)

On June first we completed a very active year with our most ambitious and very successful production of that famous Kaufman and Hart comedy, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. During the school year, five one-act plays were pro-

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THE DIRECTORS SAY,

"Excellent . . . The dialogue is well written and the pace throughout is fast. It should prove a popular Class play for high school production." . . . Bruce Roach, Interscholastic Leaguer, University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

"I found 'HENRIETTA THE EIGHTH' to be especially good for high school students to do. Its teen age appeal supplemented by an adult philosophy makes a good combination from both audience and the actor. It is a play, the interpretation of which is well within abilities of teen agers." . . . Ethel M. Hale, Director, Hackettstown High School, N. J.

"'HENRIETTA THE EIGHTH' was a great success as this year's Senior Class production. Our audience enjoyed it tremendously and the cast was enthusiastic about the story and plot. For teen-agers, and even adults, I recommend this play as good entertainment." . . . Haig Arakelian, Drama Instructor, La Jolla Junior-Senior High School, La Jolla, Calif.

"We thoroughly enjoyed rehearsing and producing 'HENRIETTA THE EIGHTH,' and the local audience was enthusiastic about the play as an evening of good entertainment very well suited to the high school age." . . . Christine E. Lucas, Director, Senior High School, Uniontown, Pa.

"Our Junior Class put on 'HENRIETTA THE EIGHTH' and it was an outstanding success. It is certainly an ideal play for a high school cast." . . . Sylvia Stecher, Speech Director, Carthage High School, Mo.

Dramatists Play Service, Inc.

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duced as follows: *The Valiant*, *Colchicum Autumnale*, *The Monkey's Paw*, *There's One in Every Company* and *Dust of the Road*. On May 27 an initiation and picnic was held at the home of one of the members near the bluffs of the Mississippi River. At this time, seven new members were initiated into the group.—John Davis, Secretary

West Allis, Wisconsin
(Thespians Troupe 838)

"In the Glow of the Candles"—this was the theme of Troupe 838 as the 1951 installation honored 22 new members. This is the new Troupe song. Our play of the year, *Death Takes a Holiday*, was a real success, and the next production, *The Poor Nut*, was also well received. A party with alumni was held this summer. They keep coming back.—Frances Zaffiro, President

Stow, Ohio
(Thespians Troupe 155)

A sophisticated college girl, a jilted lover, a disgusted family, and a snobbish mama's boy convene to form a ticklish problem and a hilarious solution in the Stow High senior play *The Campbells Are Coming*. When lovely Kaye Brannigan came home from college with a gushing accent and announced that her fiance, Kingston Campbell, and his mother were coming, the family decided to impersonate a hillbilly family to discourage the aristocratic visitors. Ma Brannigan and her grandchildren

enlisted the aid of Jeff, the jilted lover, his uncle, the hillbilly maid, and her father. However, several incidents and events surprising even to the actors created a comic situation.—Dorothe Van Sise, Reporter

Scranton, Pennsylvania
(Thespians Troupe 1024)

We enjoyed a very successful second year under the supervision of Mrs. Marie Lesniak. This year 28 students were raised to Thespians membership.

(Continued on page 24)



Cheaper by the Dozen, Junior Class Play of the Central High School, Oklahoma City, Okla., Maybelle Conger, Director and Sponsor of Troupe 822.

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CHATTER

(Continued from page 23)

The outstanding project of the Thespian Troupe was the presentation of a trio of one-act plays in January: *The Marriage Proposal*, *Boomerang*, and *Ladies of the Mop*. *You Can't Take It With You*, the Kaufman-Hart hit comedy, was the only full length play presented at the school. One-act plays included *The Melting Pot*, *A Day to Remember*, *Where But in America?* *Surprise Guest*, *A Vote for Uncle Sam*, *East Is West*, *The Play without a Name* and *The Door*. Pageants and revues were also given. Our stress on voice and diction during the year was climaxed with the purchase of a tape recorder. Our next project is to record, for experience, Booth Tarkington's *Seventeen*.—Marion M. Duricko, Reporter

Sinsinawa, Wisconsin

(Thespian Troupe 11)

During the past six years Saint Clara Academy has presented for their major productions only experimental, original and children's plays. Our most ambitious venture was a symphonic drama, *Centennial Song*, produced first as a play and later made into a movie on the Sinsinawa campus by the same cast. The Senior Class play this year was an adaptation of a short story of Ruth Sawyer's *A Matter of Brogues*, written and produced with the permission of the author and the Viking Press. The plot deals with the people of Donegal, Ireland, who are unable to attend the grand wedding of Bridget, the shepherd's daughter, and Duirmuid, the Marquis' son, because they cannot come *decent*, that is, wearing brogues. Tomais, the crusty old cobbler, refuses the gift or the loan of shoes for the occasion. Conal, Donegal's



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New Rochelle, New York

(Thespian Troupe 634)

The production of *Pygmalion* will bring to a close an unusual and successful 21st season. This year, The Tower Players, under the direction of Mr. W. Emerson Burke, have presented *The*

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Front Page, outstanding for its convincing sound effects; *Beggar on Horseback*, well noted for its fourteen sets of original design and student construction; music for the ballet, *A Kiss in Xanadu*, composed and directed by Jerry Bilik, a senior, the forty-five students actors, and the twenty-five stage crew members; and *The Young and Fair* which required a two story set. Added to the big productions, six one-act plays were also presented.—Marilyn DuMond, Secretary

Visalia, California

(Thespian Troupe 1074)

Our troupe, organized in June 1950 has had a busy first year. *The Great American Family* with Noni Stein and Lawrence Cotta as leads was the first production in November, 1950. In February 14 new members were initiated. In the spring play, *Best Foot Forward*, Patty McCarty and Patrick Gorman headed the cast. *High Window*, a one-act play, was presented with a student director, Harvey Prince, May 9, 10, 11. A series of Poe stories adapted for radio were presented this summer over KKKIN by a group of Thespians under the direction of Lawrence Cotta and Frank Carpenter. Troupe 1074, under the leadership of Mrs. Agnes Wertz, ended the year with a party and initiation.—Lawrence Cotta, Scribe



Meet Me in St. Louis, Owatonna, Minn., High School (Thespian Troupe 971), Helen Stepper, Sponsor.

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Pontiac, Michigan (Thespian Troupe 499)

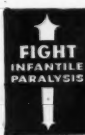
The students of Pontiac Senior High School were enthusiastic about central staging when the Speech Department introduced it for its spring production, *Seventeenth Summer*. Sitting close to the actors and catching the intricacies of their speech and facial expressions, the audience felt as though it played an important part in the production. Every student concerned with the production felt that central staging made greater demands than the traditional staging, since everything had to be genuine; however, they favor it. They felt that they put more into the acting. Now the most frequent question is "When are we going to have another play in The Pontiac High School Penthouse Theatre?"—*Sandra Anderson, President*

Fall River, Massachusetts (Thespian Troupe 254)

"Hail Thespis" was the cry sounded by the members of the B.M.C. Durfee High School Drama Class as they departed for Boston during the 1950 Thanksgiving holidays to attend the annual convention of the New England Speech Association. We Fall River pupils were invited to demonstrate "stage design" using our working model of the school set with doll furniture. The student authors arranged the stages for their four original plays for the edi-



Clementine, Thespian Troupe 813, Everett High School, Maryville, Tenn., Martha Wray, Director.



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JANUARY 2-31

cation of the adult audience. Durfeeites agreed that much was learned and enjoyed at this conference of Speech Teachers.—*Natalie Telles, Reporter*

Tulsa, Oklahoma

(Thespian Troupe 1167)

Troupe 1167 was officially installed October 24, 1951. We had our installation at the beautiful home of our president, Paul McBride. Troupe 817 of Central High School in Tulsa installed our troupe. The ceremony was most impressive. We were interested in learning that all the charter members of Central's troupe are now employed in speech or dramatics work, some as teachers, some in radio work, and some in professional theater. This group is under the sponsorship of Miss Isabelle Ronan. After the ceremony, refreshments were served. At this time the new troupe displayed a *Life* magazine exhibit picturing the history of the theater from ritual to Broadway. This included 25 blown up panels 25" by 32" each.

We are pleased to report that all of the seniors in our troupe received parts in the senior play, *Henrietta the VIII*,

which was presented October 19 and 20. The two junior members were in the cast for the junior play, *Calling All Ghosts*, which was presented November 30 and December 1.—*Kay Taylor, Secretary*

Torrance, California

(Thespian Troupe 1133)

An historical event took place in Torrance, California, on May 31, when Troupe 1133 was initiated. The setting for the event was a banquet given by the school's drama club, the Tartar Theater Guild. San Pedro Troupe 435 conducted the initiation ceremony before a gathering of 140 people. The candle-carrying initiates, formally attired, added much to the impressive ceremony. Gold "Oscars" were awarded by the sponsor, Dan D. Desmond, to the year's most outstanding speech and drama students. Also featured on the program was the one-act play, *The Happy Journey*, by Thornton Wilder. This was the play given at the El Camino Junior College play festival.—*Marian McDonald, Secretary*

Chicago, Illinois

(Thespian Troupe 1039)

The members of Troupe 1039 at Wendell Phillips High School have been as busy as the proverbial bee. They started out the last year by spellbinding the community with their interpretation of *Little Women*, which was most impressively done. Even standing room was at a premium. Then recasting . . . they did *Vanity* so beautifully that the compliments haven't stopped coming in yet. The workshop hummed full speed with *Death Takes a Holiday*, which was presented June 6, 7. For growth and development of the players, the following one-act plays were worked on and criticized by players and directors: *Will-o'-the Wisp*, *Mooncalf*, *Mugford*, *The Heritage of Wimpole Street*.—*Verla Graham, Reporter*



Star Wagon, Thespian Troupe 201, Great Neck, N. Y., High School, Bernard Boressoff, Director.

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WORKERS

(Continued from page 17)

ment heads and other management, is over thirty dollars, or ten times the average contribution from skilled labor throughout the city.

The studio is virtually a city in itself, with its own barbershop, restaurant, fire protection, police department and hospital. Its generator plant could care for the light and power of a town of 50,000. Art Houser wants someday to tell the story of that city through a documentary film. He is acutely aware of the fact that if Hollywood has failed at all in its public relations, it has failed only because it has been preoccupied with selling its stars and its products, too little concerned with selling itself. He is proud of the studio "city" and its American workers and the families they represent; he would like the public to meet them as they are.

Since four-fifths of the studio employees are men, and since the average age of studio workers is 47, the club activities are built around the family. In addition to the many social and recreational events planned for families of studio employees, special consideration is given to the children. There is the traditional Christmas party of course. In a recent art contest a special children's division met with a success that matched that of the elders.

The "internal activities" that the club sponsors are a kind of public relations

program in themselves. Art Houser estimates a reading public of 13,000 for *Action*, the 20th Century-Fox house organ, largely among the families of the employees. "If they believe in the firm," he says, "they'll spread the word." *Action* is published monthly by the club, detailing news of club and studio activity. Editorials, special features, progress reports on campaigns and contests, purchasing guides — all are sparked by excellent pictures and attractive layouts.

Popular among club functions are the little theatre productions. The theatre comfortably seats 150 in a converted hall, once a cafeteria, adjoining the clubhouse. The shows are largely amateur, though on occasion a company player takes a role between pictures. The production of the plays is primarily for the employees themselves; the actors come from all departments, as do the crews. The results are often near-professional in the best sense of the word.

It is typical of Art Houser that he should give credit to another person for the good employee-relations at 20th. The person is Fred Metzler, the studio's Manager and Treasurer, who conceived the idea of the Studio Club and nurtured its infancy in understanding and skillful guidance.

The careful planning that went into its development is reflected in the pattern that exists today. For example, the annual supper-dance provides a unique

opportunity for an employee to escort his wife on an evening of the best dance music, food and entertainment — at a price he can afford. The dance is held at a luxury spot such as the Coconut Grove or the Biltmore Bowl, with entertainment donated by company stars.

The golf tournament is so set up that every participant receives a merchandise award that is worth at least double the amount of his entry fee. A popular feature is the "blind bogey"; in each flight of the tournament, a specified number of strokes on one hole will earn a special prize; the worst duffer stands a good chance of picking up an extra award! The total value of the prize merchandise is around \$10,000. Where does it all come from? From the scores of firms with whom the studio does regular business — firms whose management know the public relations value of this kind of gesture.

The Motion Picture Relief organization is unsurpassed in its care for workers. The 20th Century-Fox studio supplements this industry-wide function by maintaining its own special fund to provide temporary aid to 20th employees, pending action by the MPR. The studio limits such aid to an individual to \$200, an amount that frequently has helped a worker through an emergency.

Study and planned recreation are no small part of the club's activities. The facilities of a nearby YMCA are available, as are the gym and pool of the Beverly Hills High School. A fine city recreational center is adjacent to the studio grounds. A class in any subject is immediately set up whenever requested by a group of employees: television, public speaking, economics, American traditions, arts and crafts. The studio is thus able to supplement the city's heavy demand for adult education, and to create a program tailored to the expressed needs of club members.

Art Houser summed up his feelings about his present job and the firm he works for. "These are ideal working conditions. No whistle blows. Relationships are informal, though clearly defined. We dress as we please — and that usually means well, but comfortably. Departments, while not completely autonomous, work with a maximum of independence; this is as much a stimulus to good work as it is a reward for it."

Do good employee relations make for better pictures? Undoubtedly, though they hardly can make all pictures great films any more than harmonious company relations can prevent the frequent Broadway failures. It is refreshing, however, to find in an industry so far removed from the popular conception of "big business," a genuine concern for the welfare and happiness of its employees, and a successful implementation of that concern.

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one knows what to believe. A psychologist is summoned and also the FBI and even these sacred representatives are mowed down in the onrush of events, and it is really a fake psychologist (one of the students dressed up) who helps bring order out of chaos. The play is high farce; it involves a cast of whacky characters, most of whom remain visible, but some who don't. Directors frequently appeal: "Please give us a play that has entertainment — plus!" We believe that the author of "In the Spring the Sap," "Love Is Too Much Trouble," "One Wild Night," "The Zoozah," and "When I Was Green," has met that demand in his highly explosive, completely enjoyable TO BLUSH UNSEEN. The high point of your season will be reached with Author LePelley's "best play yet."

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Dorothy Brandt and Earl Carrier in a scene from *Death Takes a Holiday*, Winchester, Mass., High School (Thespian Troupe 729), Thomas Morse, Director.

THEATRE

(Continued from page 16)

gimmick. The entire cast is composed of four soldiers, who are prisoners of war. The enemy (identified in the play as "Towzer") is holding them in a church not far removed from the area of battle. The names of the characters offer a clue to the structure employed by the dramatist. The soldiers are named David King, Peter Able, Joseph Adams and Tim Meadows. In their sleep they become identified with their biblical counter-parts. In this way, *A Sleep of Prisoners* acquires a timelessness and Mr. Fry is able to discuss the entire range of human endeavor.

It is impossible to grasp the full significance of the play upon first hearing. Interesting arguments could be advanced on both sides of a debate as to the necessity of a writer being understood at first hearing. My prime points on each side would be: (1) If a writer desires to write for the theatre, he must keep in mind the necessity of communicating his ideas to the audience upon first hearing. It is not fair to assume that the audience is going to attend a course on your play before attending it. (2) Serious writers — even those most given to involved and abstruse writing — should be encouraged to write for the theatre. Shall we impose conditions upon their doing so or set rules for them to follow? This would indeed be very wrong.

I was torn before attending as to whether I should first read the published text. I decided at length that it would be a better test of the play to go without too much homework and see how effectively the ideas of the play were presented to me. I did grasp a large part of Mr. Fry's message but it is almost impossible to get all without some brief. Having now read the text as published by the Oxford University Press, I would like to re-visit the play in performance.

I hope that this will be possible at some time. I would be keenly interested in knowing how some of you feel this question should be resolved.

Under the direction of Michael MacOwen all of the cast deserves commendation. The four British actors — all not very widely known in the United States — are Stanley Baker, Donald Harron, Hugh Pryse, Leonard White. We are most grateful to them and to everyone concerned for bringing Christopher Fry's modern masque to us.

Not all of the recent Broadway products have been on so high a spiritual plane. One of the town's most recent hits is a musical, *Top Banana*. The title derives from the term used to describe a burlesque show comedian. The comedian of the piece is a one-time baggy-pants burlesquer who has become America's favorite television performer. Many of the attributes of the role are ascribed to Milton Berle. It would have been amusing to have been part of the first-night audience with Phil Silvers doing Berle onstage and "Uncle Miltie" doing Berle in the auditorium.

Assisting Mr. Silvers in the production are Joey Faye, Rose Marie and Jack Albertson as well as several performers better known to the runways of the burlesque houses than to the more rarefied atmosphere of the Broadway playhouse. The book of *Top Banana* is by Hy Kraft; the music and lyrics by Johnny Mercer. It's a solid hit at the Winter Garden.

Another recent arrival on the lyrical side of the local ledger is a revival of *Music in the Air*. This operetta ranks, I should say, second only to *Show Boat* as the favorite work of the late Jerome Kern. Its score includes such favorites as *I've Told Every Little Star*, *There's a Hill Beyond a Hill* and *Egern on the Tegern See*. I saw the original production and well remember Tullio Carminati, Natalie Hall and Al Shean (of Gallagher and Shean) with warmth. The revival offers Dennis King, Jane Pickens, Charles Winninger and Conrad Nagel. It is especially recommended to those who have not yet met Jerome Kern's delightful work.

Two-character plays are most difficult to bring off with éclat. It is particularly noteworthy therefore that Hume Cronyn and his wife, Jessica Tandy, are winning such favor in Jan de Hartog's *The Fourposter*. It is a tale of thirty-five years of a marriage and has been seen quite widely along the summer circuit. At one time Rex and Lilli Palmer Harrison were mentioned for the roles.

Jan de Hartog is the young Dutch dramatist whose *Skipper Next to God* was a great hit of the Experimental Theatre a few seasons ago. *The Fourposter* reveals him in a lighter vein and will make, it seems, his first hit of major proportions in our theatre.

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week ahead. Miss Cheryl Crawford is submitting for our approval, *Paint Your Wagon*, a musical about the California gold rush. James Barton and Olga San Juan play the leading roles. The book and music are by Frederick Loewe and Alan Jay Lerner, the team responsible for Miss Crawford's earlier hit *Brigadoon*. Agnes de Mille has done the choreography.

The First Drama Quartette, composed of Agnes Morehead, Charles Boyer, Cedric Hardwicke and Charles Laughton, made two appearances in town in their reading of *Don Juan in Hell*. This is a rarely heard section of Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman* — it was omitted from Maurice Evans' recent production of the work. The Quartette has been reading it up and down the country, and did a performance at Carnegie Hall as well as in Brooklyn's Academy of Music and in Newark's Mosque Theatre. Their critical acclaim has been so favorable that they are returning for a month's engagement. I shall most certainly visit them then and render a report in these pages.

The only other item of importance is the return of "two-a-day" to the Palace. Once the mecca of all vaudeville artists, the theatre at 47th Street and Broadway is once again of note. The first bill is headed by Judy Garland, who is flanked by Smith and Dale (doing their famous "Dr. Cronkhitte" act), and the Szonys.

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MISS BROOKS

(Continued from page 13)

over the costume and part in *Lost Horizon* to the Coach. No part of *Lost Horizon* is actually presented. They are merely rehearsing it.

Our costume for Lo-Tsen actually came from China. It was a richly embroidered bright blue. The serving girl wore authentic Chinese pajamas, and we used the same type robe for the High Lama as for Lo-Tsen except it was black, embroidered in white and he used no sash.

Budget

Playbooks, \$12.75; Publicity, \$4.80; Tickets, \$4.50; Properties, \$2.85; Stage Craft, \$15.00; Royalty, \$35.00; Programs, \$50.00; Total, \$124.90.

Publicity

We feel that our publicity was our most successful advertising to date. The publicity committee made posters (hand done) and distributed them all over the city about a month prior to the show. During the ensuing month they followed this up with radio shows and newspaper stories and pictures. The week before the play all napkins in the school cafeteria were stamped with publicity concerning the play and skits were carried to various surrounding schools. Letters were sent to all the businesses in town advertising the play. Two days before the play each student was given a slip of paper advertising the play as he bought his lunch. On the day of the play several students checked all parking meters. If a car was parked over-time, a penny was placed in the meter and a card reading "We have saved you \$1.00; use it to see *Our Miss Brooks* at the Bay Street Auditorium tonight. Curtain time: 8:00" was placed on the windshield. Tickets were on sale at various points and individuals in the department advertised the play by talking about it. As a result—a full house.

Results

The value of producing *Our Miss Brooks* to cast, crew, audience and director is limitless. The cast had fun and were able, after studying the play, to view teachers' problems and attitudes on problems more objectively. In other words they became very sympathetic. This idea was conveyed to youngsters in the audience. We have never given any play that brought so much joy and left so many pleasant memories. The cast and crew also learned valuable lessons backstage. Working under crowded conditions they learned lessons of close cooperation, understanding, importance of responsibilities and pride in a job well done. Both audience and cast regretted closing the show. From all sides we have had repeated requests to repeat *Our Miss Brooks*.

Next Month: *Cradle of Glory*.



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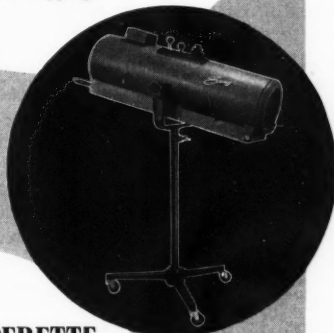


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ACTING

(Continued from page 9)

but not the proper kind. Instead the actor's thoughts should be: "I (the character being played) hear footsteps coming. Only two people know I'm here. They've come back. If they find me here, they'll lock me in. I may be kept here for days. I've got to get out! There's no window. Only the door. I've got to escape!" This is correct motivation, as long of course as the environment and the given circumstances of the situation make these particular thoughts appropriate to the character being played. The action and emotion will flow easily and naturally from this second motivating thought sequence. In addition, subtle and expanded reactions beyond the bare outline of the given action will develop spontaneously. To summarize, the actor must think the thoughts of the character immediately and not as one removed, and he must motivate from inside the character, not outside.

There is a further necessity for any motivation that is going to be truly believable to the actor and hence to the audience. It is quite possible for an actor to find a good motivation, or have one suggested to him by the director, and still he will end up by *showing* the audience what the character wants, or says, or does, rather than creating belief in the situation. When this happens it is usually because the motivation violates the actor's own experience, understanding, logic, or sense of truth. The actor must always be able to say to himself: "If I were the given character in this given situation, I would think, or feel, or say, or do this particular thing." And the statement must seem to him to be true. When it does he will have found a motivation in which he can believe.

Once the actor has learned to think the thoughts of the character as his own, and has motivations that seem true to him for every moment he is on the stage, he will be well on his way to creating genuine belief. He will have inner and outer action to carry him through the whole performance, so that he will never feel himself nor express to the audience that not-belonging-on-a-stage-at-all quality mentioned above. In addition, he will tend to achieve automatically that relaxation on stage that is essential to a good performance.

Concentration

Acting is a complex activity, and inevitably the actor must think of many different things while onstage. There are many things he should *not* be thinking about upon any conscious level during the performance, however. Yet these are things which often seem to fill the minds of amateur actors and to make any kind of adequate performance impossible.

The actor should not be thinking about his lines in the sense of worrying



Mary Helen Gallagher and Margaret Schryver in a scene from *A Matter of Brogues*, presented by the Saint Clara Academy (Thespian Troupe 11), Sinsinawa, Wisc., Sr. Tomas More, Director.

about what he is to say next. One of his earliest duties is to get his lines and get them exactly, so that soon after beginning rehearsals memorization ceases to be any concern whatsoever. The director should set a deadline for memorization and stick to it, even to the point of refusing to rehearse until lines are memorized or of removing a recalcitrant member of the cast. This is just one example of the group discipline of the theatre which is an important part of the educative value of work in the theatre. Also, it is only fair to the rest of the cast and to the director himself, since they are to be put upon public exhibition, supposedly at their best.

The actor should *not* be worrying about his next action. All action should have long since been set, down to the smallest detail, and it should have been memorized in the same way and with the same exactness as the lines. The same sort of discipline as that mentioned above is sometimes necessary on the part of the director.

The actor should *not* be thinking about what happened in the dressing room, about the party after the performance, or about Aunt Minnie sitting in the front row of the auditorium, or about any of a hundred other extraneous matters. As long as the play is on, his concern must be only for the imaginary world in which the character he is creating has his being.

The actor should *not* be giving any primary consideration to costumes, properties, setting or any other technical aspects of the production. All technical problems should have been ironed out and settled in rehearsal, so that they provide a background for the actor which he can accept, have confidence in, and then forget upon the conscious level.

The actor should *not* be directly con-

cerned with the director's over-all unifying and controlling of the play. Stage movement, stage business, aesthetic composition of stage pictures, tempo and rhythm, focus of the audience's attention by various means, vocal variety — all should have been established as a definite pattern in rehearsal. Through repetition this pattern should have assumed the status of habit which gives the actor a necessary sense of sureness and precision. Once he can really rely upon this technical framework, the actor is left wonderfully free to get on with his own work — the creation of character, emotion and belief.

Now that we have cleared out of the way all the things the actor should not be concentrating on during performance, it becomes clear where his primary focus of attention should be. It should be upon — and this cannot be too strongly emphasized — the thoughts and motivations of the character he is creating within the physical environment and given circumstances of a vividly imagined situation. Just as in real life, he concentrates upon taking in and reacting to stimuli and information from his total environment. He is absorbed in listening, in thinking, in attempts to influence the ideas and actions of others, in activities that will help him gain his own wants and desires. And he does all this in the person of the character he is creating.

Just as soon as the actor breaks this type of concentration his character will cease to exist. The audience will be treated to the sight of Mary Smith saying certain things and doing certain things on a stage rather than, for example, seeing Lady Macbeth desperately scrubbing at her hands as she walks in her sleep through a room of her castle. The contrast will be a shock, and the whole illusion and meaning of the scene will be lost for the time being.

Concentration is as closely linked with both relaxation and motivation as they are to each other. No one of these acting concepts can function well without the other two. Their division for the study of problems is actually an arbitrary one, since they form a tight little circle which lies at the core of all good acting, and to which all other acting problems are in some way tangent. Good relaxation depends upon proper concentration, proper concentration depends upon adequate motivation, but for motivations to be believable they must develop through proper concentration, and this latter is impossible unless one is relaxed, and so on around an endless circle. An amateur actor who has grasped the use of relaxation, motivation and concentration has a really firm foundation for the finest acting of which he is capable. And the better his mastery of these three, the easier all other elements of an acting technique will be to understand and to use.

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and desperate, to take an overdose of sleeping pills. At this point, Lucifer, "rounder-upper" of lost souls, appears. Mr. Morlock begs for another chance; he sees the errors of his money-mad ways. He promises complete reform if . . . if . . . and Mildred, the maid, awakens him from the torment of his horrible dream. He is very much alive! And so is Luigi! And happiness comes to everyone! This happy, wholesome, lovable play can't miss. Audiences, casts, directors love it.

TEXAS: Miss Mary Frances Ball, Director of Dramatics, McLean Jr. High School, Ft. Worth, Texas, recently wrote us as follows: "Donald Payton writes, in my opinion, almost the only plays which are perfectly adapted to junior high school. Our audience loved 'Wilbur Saw It First' and so did I!"

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CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

QUEENS

(Continued from page 8)

by Irving Berlin is based upon the career of the United States Ambassador to Luxemburg, Mrs. Perle Mesta. In the style adopted in Hollywood the following programme note is printed under Ethel Merman's listing on the cast roster: "Neither the character of Mrs. Sally Adams, nor Miss Ethel Merman, resembles any other person alive or dead." A truer word was never printed.

This unique talent was born in that portion of New York City which lies across the East River from Manhattan Island—Queens. The idea of the stage fascinated her as early as the age of six, but she pursued a commercial course in high school. After her graduation she was employed as a secretary for a Long Island City brake-lining plant. Though most of her days were spent in front of a typewriter, her nights were free to sing in night clubs and cafes. An agent heard her at a place called Little Russia and endeavored to secure for her better engagements.

The results of these efforts were not very impressive. Ethel was engaged by Warner Brothers to make film shorts. This was the period of the early talking and sound film. Performers with stage experience were eagerly sought. Many of us recall the Vitagraph featurettes of that era. They were miniature stage musicals—a band plus a vocalist plus a

comic plus sound. At this time too she was engaged for an appearance with Clayton, Jackson and Durante. The last named of this trio is the widely known Jimmy Durante, who with his partners formed one of the most popular teams of the late '20s and the early '30s. She appeared with this team at the Palace, the goal of every vaudevillian. Incidentally, after several years of films with and without accompanying vaudeville, two-a-day has just recently returned to the Palace. Judy Garland, who follows in the Merman tradition, is headlining the first bill there under the new policy.

Our Ethel's first appearance in a Broadway musical took place on October 14, 1930, at the Alvin Theatre. Her role was Kate Fothergill in *Girl Crazy*; book by Guy Bolton and John McGowan; music by George Gershwin. The cast included Willie Howard, Allen Kearns, Ginger Rogers, William Kent and Lew Parker. Stephen Rathbun reported in his review: "with Miss Ethel Merman, with her robust voice, stopping the show three times with her songs, *Girl Crazy* is a 1930 pattern of a musical comedy success."

Miss Merman recalled those days in an interview with S. J. Woolf, which appeared in the *NEW YORK TIMES* on June 2, 1946. "We opened in New York at the Alvin Theatre. My dressing room was up four flights. But on the opening

night after I had sung *I've Got Rhythm*, George Gershwin, he was a swell guy—walked up those stairs and said, 'Ethel, you've put it over.' . . . But do you know how long it took me to get down those four flights of stairs in the Alvin? It was not until ten years later, when I was acting in *Something for the Boys*, that I was given the star's dressing room."

During that ten years, however, Ethel Merman introduced many of the top musical comedy tunes of the era. Every production she put her stamp upon was a hit. There was *Take a Chance* in 1932, and in 1934, *Anything Goes*. This was the show in which she teamed with Victor Moore and William Gaxton and the score included *You're the Top*, *I Get a Kick Out of You* and *Blow, Gabriel, Blow*. *Red, Hot and Blue* followed, and *Stars in Your Eyes*, *Du Barry Was a Lady*, *Panama Hattie*, the aforementioned *Something for the Boys* and *Annie Get Your Gun*. Miss Merman's appearance as the famed sharpshooter in the Irving Berlin-Herbert and Dorothy Fields work set the final stamp upon her stardom.

A few weeks ago Ethel Merman completed her first year's run as Mme. Ambassador Sally Adams in *Call Me Madam*. The end of this engagement is not in sight and, after that, she has promised to appear in the film version. I rather think her exuberance will all but burst the screen and the sound equipment,



Ray Killebrew and Eileen Harting in a scene from *Only an Orphan Girl*, presented by the Fairview High School (Thespian Troupe 1069), Jennings, Mo., Robert K. Gilmore, Director.

but it will be good to have so rich a performance set down in permanent form. Soon after that, a large segment of the public hopes that Ethel Merman will introduce us to another of her magnificent musical comedy portrayals.

No matter how many future hits Mary Martin appears in, she will always be remembered for her rendition of *My Heart Belongs to Daddy* in *Leave It to Me* and for Ensign Nellie Forbush in *South Pacific*.

Mary Martin is the pride of Weatherford, Texas, where she was born in 1913. She attended school in Nashville, Tennessee, and her first Broadway appearance was as the gal whose heart was spoken for in the aforementioned *Leave It to Me*. In this musical version of Bella and Sam Spewack's *Clear All Wires*, she was in the company of such seasoned musical favorites as William Gaxton and Victor Moore. Perhaps this duo was invested with some kind of success charm for they (you may recall) also accompanied Ethel Merman in *Anything Goes*. So great was Miss Martin's success that she was starred soon after in *One Touch of Venus*. This was the Ogden Nash-Kurt Weill opus which brought the goddess of the title to earth and involved her in mortal amours. Miss Martin was surrounded by John Boles, Kenny Baker and Paula Laurance and she sang the hauntingly lovely *Speak Low*.

In her next role Mary Martin displayed another facet of her talents. The musical *Lute Song* is closer to opera in form than to the conventional Broadway musical. Adapted from an old Oriental play, *Pi-Pa-Ki*, the work had a rare folk quality and a delicate beauty that is not seen often enough in the environs of Shubert Alley.

Mary Martin next won a following in the English theatre by doing the leading role in a work of Noel Coward's *Pacific 1860*. One of the few works of the actor-playwright-director-composer-producer not seen in the United States, it did nevertheless establish Miss Martin in the English theatre. She next played the leading role in a touring company of *Annie Get Your Gun*, the

same Irving Berlin musical, which Ethel Merman established as a hit.

In April, 1949, Mary Martin scored her most solid success to date. As Ensign Nellie Forbush in *South Pacific*, she displayed the total range of her many-faceted talent. This is the still current work with score by Richard Rodgers; book and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein, II (adapted from James Michener's Pulitzer Prize winning *Tales of the South Pacific*). First with Ezio Pinza and later with Ray Middleton, Miss Martin filled the Majestic Theatre to capacity for more than two years. The "Standing Room Only" sign still hangs alongside the Majestic box-office, but Mary Martin has been replaced by Martha Wright and the Messrs. Pinza and Middleton by Roger Rico.

A few nights ago Miss Martin opened in *South Pacific* at the famous Drury Lane Theatre in London. Though the critical reception was not as wholeheartedly enthusiastic as that of New York, the public has taken the work to its heart. One of the favorites in London as in New York was Miss Martin's rendition of *I'm Goin' to Wash That Man Right Out of My Hair*. The gusto with which she covered the entire stage while doing that tune is memorable. Wilbur Evans is playing Emile at the Drury

Lane and—in a small role—is Larry Hegeman, Miss Martin's son.

I have purposely omitted Gertrude Lawrence from mention in this article. She is, as you know, playing Anna in the musical adapted by Rodgers and Hammerstein from *Anna and the King of Siam*. Miss Lawrence is equally at home in such pieces as Shaw's *Pygmalion* and Rachel Crothers' *Susan and God* as in *Charlot's Revue* and *The King and I*. We shall have a visit with her in the following issue of *DRAMATICS* along with Celeste Holm, who also commutes from musical to drama, and with Shirley Booth. Miss Booth performs the most amazing feats of this kind, for she literally jumps from the highly emotional stress of *Come Back, Little Sheba* to the raffishness of *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*.

Space does not permit a glance at other musical comedy favorites. Perhaps we shall catch some of them up in subsequent issues. We should have liked to tell you about Nancy Walker and in particular her enactment of Brunhilde Cassidy in *On the Town*, or Mary McCarty, or Vivienne Segal, who will soon re-appear in one of her top roles in *Pal Joey*. Others come to mind—Nanette Fabray, Jane Pickens, Ann Crowley—all have made valuable contributions to America's lyric theatre.



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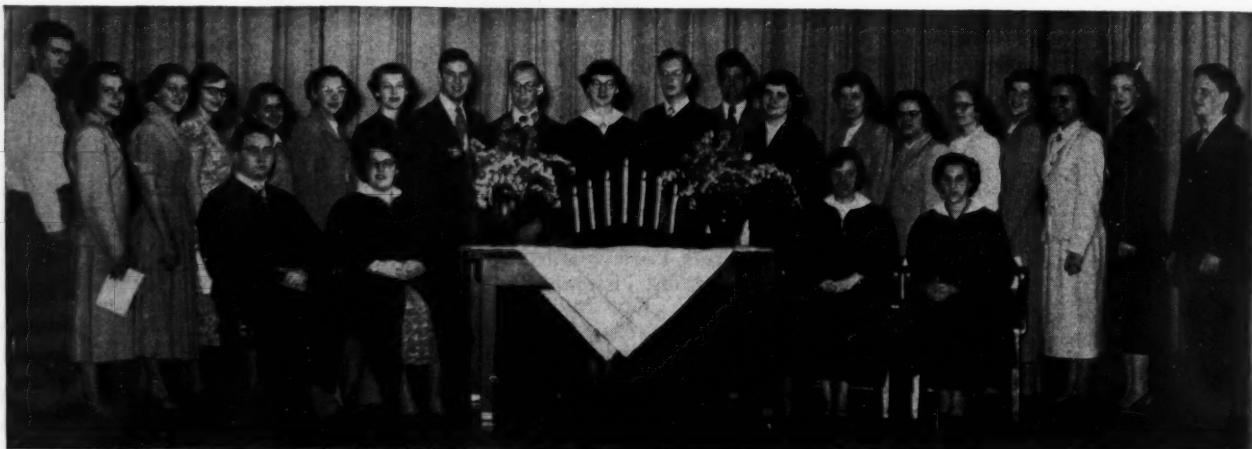
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MUSIC

(Continued from page 7)

to the director. *The Importance of Being Earnest* begins with a piano being played in the next room, just off stage, but the author offers no suggestions.

"Did you hear what I was playing, Lane?" asks Algernon, walking into the room, and the butler replies, "I didn't think it polite to listen, sir." Algy goes on to explain: "I don't play accurately. Anyone can play accurately. But I play with wonderful expression. As far as the piano is concerned, sentiment is my forte."

Now if the offstage pianist plays a Bach fugue as if he were competing for a scholarship, the music has been badly chosen and meaninglessly played. As we must take the words "expression" and "sentiment" as our clues, the pianist plays in a lingering, soupy style something by a very romantic composer, and then in the most embarrassing spot hits a wrong note. You get a laugh from your audience (and a legitimate one too) before the first actor steps on stage, and what director and cast would not love that? In addition, as soon as Algy says, "I don't play accurately. Anyone can play accurately. But I play with wonderful expression," the audience laughs again. They remember the soupiness and they remember the clinker. The comedy gets off to a good start.

It is easier of course to choose music that is going to sound funny, since for comedy the wrong choice is usually the right choice. If someone says, "I'm going to take a rest. Play me a little soft music," and the helpful one bangs out Mendelssohn's *War March of the Priests*, you can be sure of a big laugh. It is corny, but it is funny.

The choice in a serious play is harder, whether it is for a song or a piece for the piano, or what to play as the audience is settling down. And it is not fair to play what the orchestra knows best with no regard for the mood of the play.

Period and style are something to consider. If you are doing Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*, rollicking music of the eighteenth century is perfect, and some of those drinking songs are worth reviving. Find them in the music library. *Peg o' My Heart*, a romantic play, demands something quite different. It is folly putting the audience into a rollicking mood at the beginning of a sentimental play. If you do, the actors are going to have a terrible time all through Act One, getting the audience back into the right mood. Why make it harder for them? Isn't it difficult enough to produce a play without having the music fight against you? Get it on your side. It can be very persuasive.

At the beginning of a play and during the act intermissions, the members of the audience are going to be talking and coughing and shuffling, and some of the musicians (if you use live music) are going to feel insulted because no one is listening. Actually though people are listening, though they may not think they are. Sometimes even bad music is more interesting than what one's theatre companion in the next seat is saying. With recorded music of course the performers do not know they are being insulted, so you do not have to calm them down.

Scene intermissions, however, are different. The house lights are not raised, the audience is not supposed to leave the auditorium, and no interruption is wanted, but still an actor has to change a costume or the stage crew has to whisk off a living room and replace it with a factory or a forest. What do you do? Let the audience chatter or listen to the bumping? Of course not. You play music, thus killing two birds with one stone. You bridge the gap (the way it is done between scenes in a radio play) and you use music which is in the exact spirit of the play, or this particular moment of the play: tender, jolly, sad, bouncing, weird, triumphant — whatever

you want. The audience likes it, and you hold the play together. Instead of being a collection of disjointed pieces, it is a unit, and it is music that gives it this unity — all the more reason for using it and taking the greatest care to use it well by choosing wisely.

Sometimes music that is familiar to the audience is the right choice; for example, *Happy Birthday* or *Silent Night*. The danger here, however, is that the audience will have its own associations with familiar music and may forget the play. "Where did I hear that last?" they will say; "Oh, yes! The summer we took that trip to Arizona. What a grand time we did have!" And the actors go on acting, but the audience is thinking of Arizona and where that cute blonde from Wichita, Kansas, is now. You don't want that. You want them with you all the time.

If you are anxious to avoid familiar music, one sure way is to compose it yourself. If you are half-way original you can be certain nobody ever heard it before. It is not so hard. You would not want to do it for a whole show perhaps, but for a few measures, why not? Or give someone who likes to play around with tunes a break! Many a composer has started this way, in high school too. In addition to livening up your show, maybe you're setting another Richard Rodgers on the road to success.

Even if your next production is straight drama, whether heavy or light, invite, if it has not been your custom, your high school orchestra to play at the performance. You will not only please the student members and the faculty director by giving them an opportunity to play publicly, but will add tremendously to the enjoyment of your paying audience. Insist, however, upon selecting the music so that it will add, not detract, from the mood of the play. If you adopt this suggestion, it will pay dividends both artistically and financially.

MAILBOX

(Continued from page 6)

secured them to the beams in the gym. They were connected by extension cords to the overhead stage lights.

The cast's rapid and unobtrusive entrances to the playing area during blackouts were particularly effective. Dots of phosphorescent paint on the legs of the aisle chairs prevented collisions and speeded up entrances and exits at the opening and closing of scenes. Screens borrowed from the churches served as green rooms where the players awaited their cues. These were placed back of the audience at the end of each aisle and players moved to their places from the dressing rooms during a blackout before each scene. The screens too were marked with the phosphorescent dots as were the knobs on the dressing room doors.

Realistic touches included the telephone actually ringing on stage, the radio playing and records played on the record player. Light cords to these and to the table lamps were connected to the footlights and concealed under the tarpaulin on the gym floor to the edge of the playing area.

Free refreshments were served between the second and third acts. Cast and crew members brought trays of ice cubes from home and stored them in the home economics refrigerator. Ginger ale was mixed with an orange drink

bought from a local dairy. Crew members and players with minor roles prepared the drink during the second act and the ushers served it from tables behind each of the four audience sectors. Linen table cloths and floral arrangements were on each table.

Programs the shape of a circle carried program notes about the new staging for the benefit of audience members who had missed the newspaper publicity. These with snapshots taken during and after the play were added to their high school annuals which arrived the following day.

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BRIEF VIEWS

THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING CO. Chicago, Illinois

Smarter and Smoother, comedy in three acts, suggested by and using material from the book by Maureen Daly, dramatized by Kristin Ser- gel; 4 m., 7 f.; living room in Baldwin home. Iris Baldwin writes a column of advice to the lovelorn but her prescriptions don't help her with her own romantic afflictions. Her sister Cathy is weaned from dungarees; Sandy, the "smooth" one, takes things too seriously; the Baldwin parents are understanding and every- one grows up — a little. The minimum of production problems, and plenty of opportunity for changes of wardrobe.

The Case of the Sulky Girl, detective-mystery, adapted by Roland Fernand from the book by Earle Stanley Gardner; 6 m., 6 f.; laid in one setting, a drawing room. This is a capable treatment of one of the best-known of the Perry Mason stories. The plot need not be recited; the pattern of Mr. Gardner's detecting has been well established and an audience will enjoy seeing the detective and his girl Friday busily at work. The murder takes place off- stage, thereby removing one problem for the producer. Police sirens, shadows, slowly-closing doors and a press photographer (female), who is "out-of-this-world," add to their bit to create a suspenseful evening's entertainment. Granted a good actor for the part of Perry Mason there should be no trouble casting this whodunit. Definitely recommended.

DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE New York City

Gramercy Ghost, play in three acts, by John Cecil Holm; 6 m., 6 f.; living room of upstairs apartment in an old house on Gramercy Park. Intending producers are notified at the outset that when this play was produced on Broadway the cast was predominantly male. The author has re-written several parts to produce the present line-up of six each, but he suggests that if male players are available in quantity the change can be made with his blessing. The play is fantastic, having to do with the ghost (friendly of course) of a Revolutionary soldier who allowed dalliance to deflect him from the delivery of a dispatch to General Washington. He is invisible to all but the girl to whom he has been "bequeathed" by the previous owner of the house. Written by the author of the near-immortal *Three Men on a Horse* it is a superior job of dramatic work and will repay study. There are some exciting production problems, none of them insurmountable, and costumes required for only four of the char- acters. Definitely recommended as something out of the ordinary.

ELDRIDGE PUBLISHING CO.

Franklin, Ohio, and Denver, Colorado

Grandma's Last Chance, comedy in three acts, by Bettye Knapp; 12 women; farmhouse interior. More suitable perhaps for performance by a girl's club than by a high school group, this farcical piece should not be passed by without consideration when an all-female play is needed. Its concern is with the members of an all-girl nightclub band, stranded some- where between Chicago and Omaha. Their rickety automobile has broken down, their hotel bill in Chicago is unpaid, the next engagement is problematical. But the farmhouse is hospita- ble and Grandma — herself a fiddler of some note — is sympathetic, despite mortgage troubles of her own. Add some bucolic romancing (off- stage) and a crow-shooting neighbor with a mischievous tongue, and the elements are there. Although no men ever appear, the

By TALBOT PEARSON

author contrives to suggest their near-presence quite admirably, and unless one studies the program very carefully there is always the feeling that one will pop in to lend variety. There is plenty of wisecracking dialogue, a neatly contrived conclusion and it should play well.

WALTER H. BAKER CO. Boston, Massachusetts

Paper Plates for Papa, a comedy in three acts, by Kurtz Gordon; 5 m., 7 f.; interior. Owing something for inspiration perhaps to an earlier play about a Pennsylvania Dutch "papa," this comedy shows the stubborn William Metzger as Shop Steward of his union. The scene is the living room of the Metzger home in Milltown, Pa., where William rules his household with militaristic arrogance. His duty to the union soon estranges him from his family, who dub him "Dictator Dad" with good reason. He forgets birthdays, makes his family line up for inspection, blows whistles to convey orders, and finally overlooks his Twenty-fifth Wedding An- niversary. That is too much for Mother, who organizes a union of her own — in the home. She drafts not only her own family but their boy and girl friends; if they want to court, they must be conscripted. The title of the play suggests what is the nature of the crown- ing indignity that brings Papa to heel, and also to a realization of what he has done to the family he really loves. Worth consideration.

Knee Deep in Trouble, comedy in three acts, by Bettye Knapp; 6 m., 8 f., the Burton living room. Mrs. Burton has spoiled her family with the result that none of them, not even Tim, her husband, has ever grown up. Everybody leaves it to Mother to do their thinking for them, to pick up their shoes and shirts, so that when at last the head of the house is disabled by an automobile accident, the house- hold falls to pieces; that is, all except Violet, who at seventeen decides she must do some good in the world. As is usual in such cases she makes some blunders, misinterprets mo- tives and situations, but eventually falls back on tea-leaves for guidance. Her girl friend Annabelle, sixteen, gets even deeper in tea leaves and has "vibrations" that lead her into difficulties. The whole play is a chapter of accidents and human nature being what it is there should be good comedy in observing the distress of other people. A happy ending, inevitable and satisfying, and everyone winds up in good humor. This is a very workman- like job, with nothing deep about it, but sug- gestive of good entertainment.

SAMUEL FRENCH

New York and Hollywood

Sauce for the Gander, comedy in three acts, by Brice Abbott; 4 m., 5 f.; the living room and den of a Manhattan apartment. While this was probably not written for the "high school trade," it should prove more satisfactory than most of the plays of that type, dealing as it does with adult problems and characters emancipated from parental supervision. The Keltons are young, married and reasonably happy. Bob is a radio writer currently occu- pied with *Oklahoma Ike*, a western serial be-

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loved of the juvenile listening audience. But he hopes one day to write the Great American Novel, and makes no concealment of the fact that radio-writing is merely a stop-gap. After eighteen months of *Oklahoma Ike*, written to the accompaniment of vacuum cleaners, tele- phones and doorbells, he goes to pieces. Sally, his wife, is short on sympathy for his blow up; she says she could turn out his program with her hands tied behind her back, so Bob calls her bluff and takes over the housework. After a few weeks the program is better than ever; Sally has the correct formula and the sponsors are beaming with joy. But this hurts Bob's pride and he walks out on his too-suc- cessful wife. It takes a third act to straighten things out and the ending is a surprise. Al- together a piece to be recommended on account of a good plot and well-defined characteriza- tions.

Star Song and other One-Act Plays, by Florence Ryerson. Six short plays by an expert and prolific practitioner who always makes sense. Two of these are "religious," one is a Christmas play (*Star Song*); and the other (*The Triumph of Job*) is a pageant play. Both would appear to be playable and effective. The four others are amiable comedies, all simple to stage and promising good entertainment.



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